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ROYAL DYNASTIES

From scandals and secrets to betrayal and bloodshed, discover the fascinating tales of history's most influential monarchies

THE FUTURE OF ROYALTY
How the world's monarchies must adapt to survive

Digital Edition

THIRD EDITION

ROMANOVS • HABSBURG-LORRAINES • BOURBONS • TUDORS • GRIMALDIS

WELCOME

For centuries powerful royal families have dominated and shaped the social and political landscapes of Europe and beyond.

Inside we explore the incredible tales of betrayal and bloodshed and the scandalous stories and shocking secrets of some of history's most fascinating and influential royal bloodlines, from the great British houses of Stuart and Windsor to Europe's legendary Habsburg-Lorraine and Bourbon dynasties. We shine a light on the benevolent monarchs, cruel tyrants and doomed despots that defined their families, as well as royalty's lesser-known but no less fascinating dukes, duchesses, princes and princesses. We uncover how the Romanovs met their tragic end, discover the rivalry that divided the Tudors, and meet the much-loved and still current Orange-Nassaus of the Netherlands. And it's not just the great European royal houses covered inside – we'll also take a tour of some of the longest-serving and most influential families from around the world, from the Solomon lineage of Abyssinia to China's great Ming dynasty. We also examine what the future holds for the world's existing royals and how they must adapt and evolve in order to survive in the modern world. Enjoy!

ROYAL DYNASTIES

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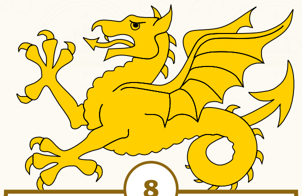

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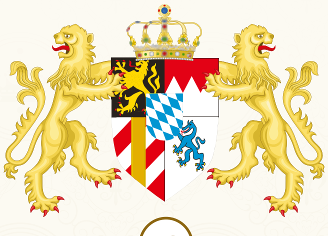

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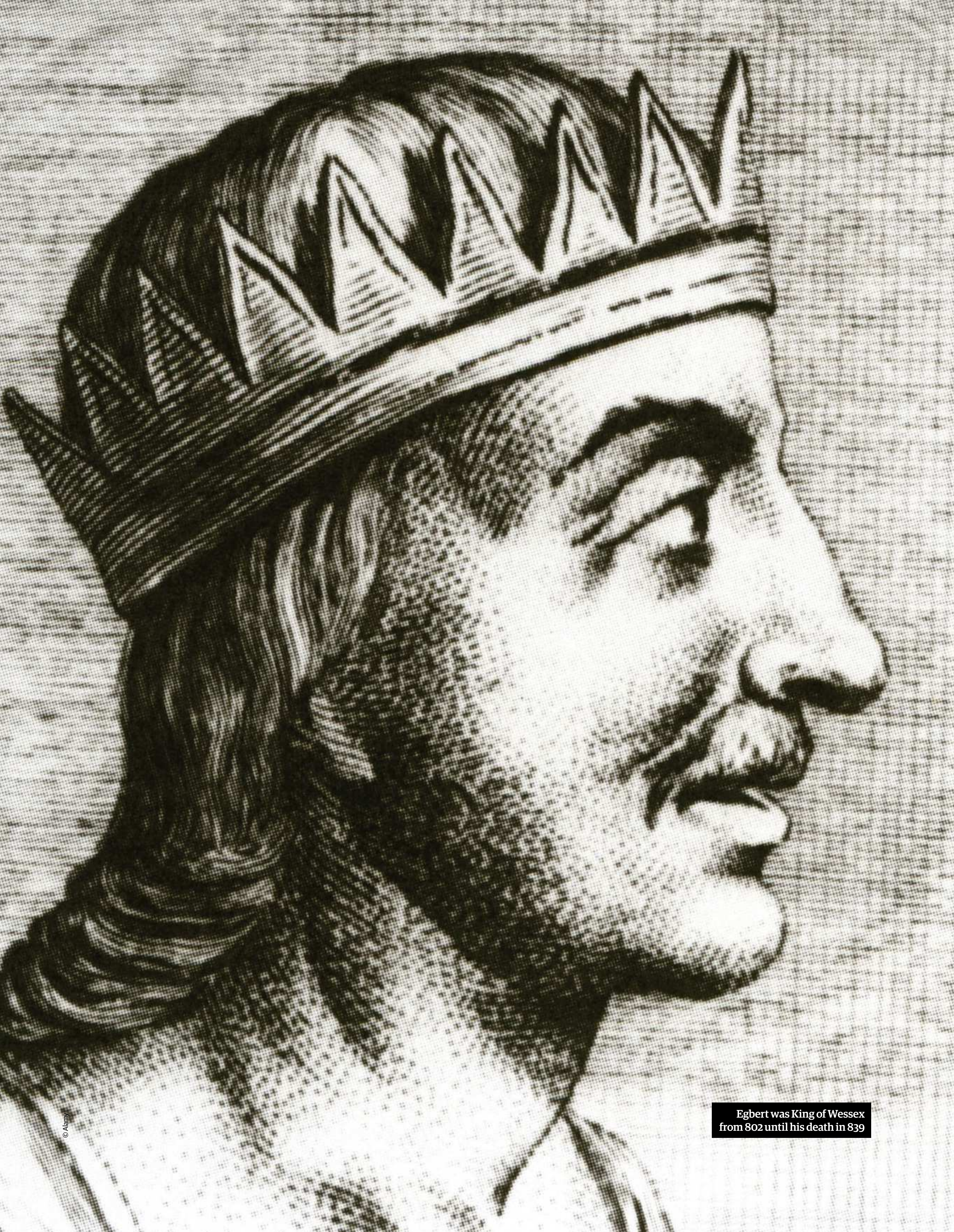
Egbert was King of Wessex from 802 until his death in 839

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WESSEX

519-1066

England's longest-lasting family that saw the nation invaded, reconquered and unified

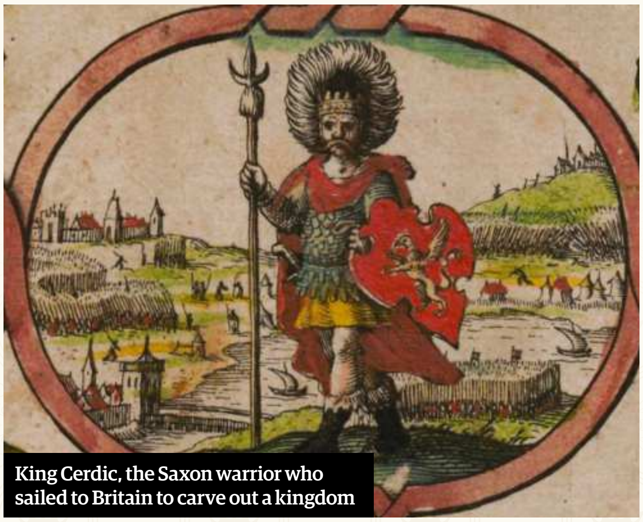
Words CHARLIE GINGER & EDOARDO ALBERT

The historic House of Wessex - also known as the House of Cerdic in honour of its Germanic founder - has its roots in the ambitions of a Saxon who would one day wage a relentless war across Britain with the aid of his son in a ruthless quest for territory and plunder, a conflict that some believe pitted him against none other than King Arthur.

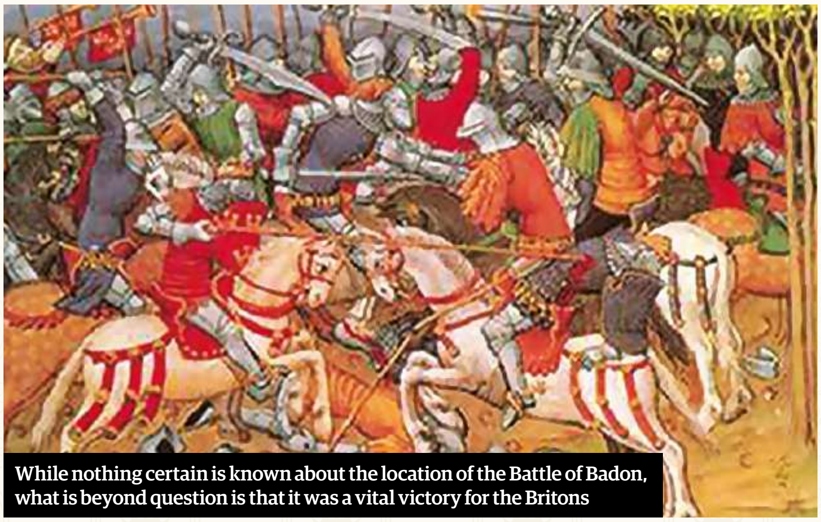
It's believed that the fearsome Cerdic landed on the coast of Hampshire in what is today southern England with his equally ambitious son Cynric in 495 CE aboard one of five Saxon ships. He had little time to adjust to his new surroundings, for according to the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle,* his host was forced to do battle with a horde of natives, who in turn were duly routed.

While it is safe to assume that both father and son will have been confronted with fierce opposition, they managed to expand their sphere of influence before solidifying their new kingdom of Wessex. In fact, so formidable were they that it is written that they scythed down a king by the name of Natanleod and slew 5,000 of his men in 508 CE. Even defeat at the Battle of Mount Badon eight years later (allegedly to a force led by King Arthur) could not blunt the Saxon expansion permanently.

With Sussex, Kent, East Anglia and swathes of Yorkshire falling to the Saxons, Cerdic left behind an imposing realm when he died in 534 CE. Succeeded by an impressive line of kings, the ferocious father of the House of Wessex established a line that would last for centuries and included men such as Egbert (who would forge a kingdom so influential that it eventually brought about the unification of England) and of course the most famous name from all of Saxon Britain: Alfred the Great, king of Wessex and the Anglo-Saxons.



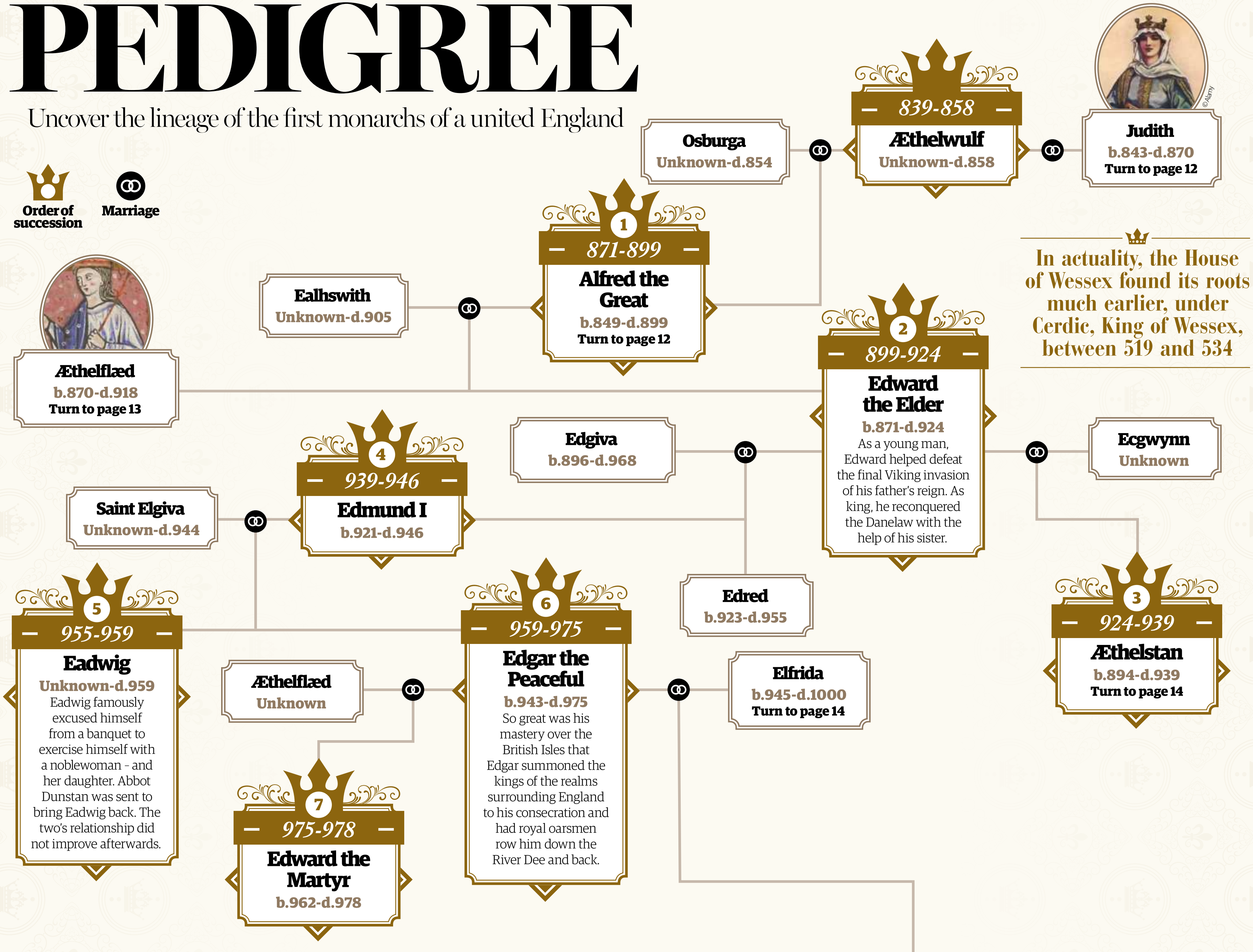
King Cerdic, the Saxon warrior who sailed to Britain to carve out a kingdom



While nothing certain is known about the location of the Battle of Badon, what is beyond question is that it was a vital victory for the Britons

The PEDIGREE

Uncover the lineage of the first monarchs of a united England



Order of succession

Marriage

Osburga
Unknown-d.854

839-858
Æthelwulf
Unknown-d.858

Judith
b.843-d.870
Turn to page 12

©Alamy

1
871-899
Alfred the Great
b.849-d.899
Turn to page 12

Ealhswith
Unknown-d.905

Æthelflæd
b.870-d.918
Turn to page 13

In actuality, the House of Wessex found its roots much earlier, under Cerdic, King of Wessex, between 519 and 534

2
899-924
Edward the Elder
b.871-d.924
As a young man, Edward helped defeat the final Viking invasion of his father's reign. As king, he reconquered the Danelaw with the help of his sister.

Ecgwynn
Unknown

Edgiva
b.896-d.968

4
939-946
Edmund I
b.921-d.946

Saint Elgiva
Unknown-d.944

3
924-939
Æthelstan
b.894-d.939
Turn to page 14

Edred
b.923-d.955

5
955-959
Eadwig
Unknown-d.959
Eadwig famously excused himself from a banquet to exercise himself with a noblewoman - and her daughter. Abbot Dunstan was sent to bring Eadwig back. The two's relationship did not improve afterwards.

Æthelflæd
Unknown

6
959-975
Edgar the Peaceful
b.943-d.975
So great was his mastery over the British Isles that Edgar summoned the kings of the realms surrounding England to his consecration and had royal oarsmen row him down the River Dee and back.

Elfrida
b.945-d.1000
Turn to page 14

7
975-978
Edward the Martyr
b.962-d.978

8
978-1013
1014-1016
Æthelred the Unready
b.968-d.1016
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Ælfgifu of York
b.970-d.1002

© Topfoto

Emma of Normandy
b.985-d.1052
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9
1013-1014
Sweyn Forkbeard
b.960-d.1014

11
1016-1035
Cnut the Great
b.995-d.1035

Ælfgifu of Northampton
b.990-d.1040

12
1035-1040
Harold Harefoot
b.1016-d.1040

13
1040-1042
Harthacnut
b.1018-d.1042

Eadwig
Unknown-d.1017

10
1016-1016
Edmund Ironside
Unknown-d.1016
Turn to page 17

Edith
b.992-d.1017

Edward the Exile
b.1016-d.1057

Agatha
b.1030-d.1070

Edgar the Outlaw
b.1051-d.1126

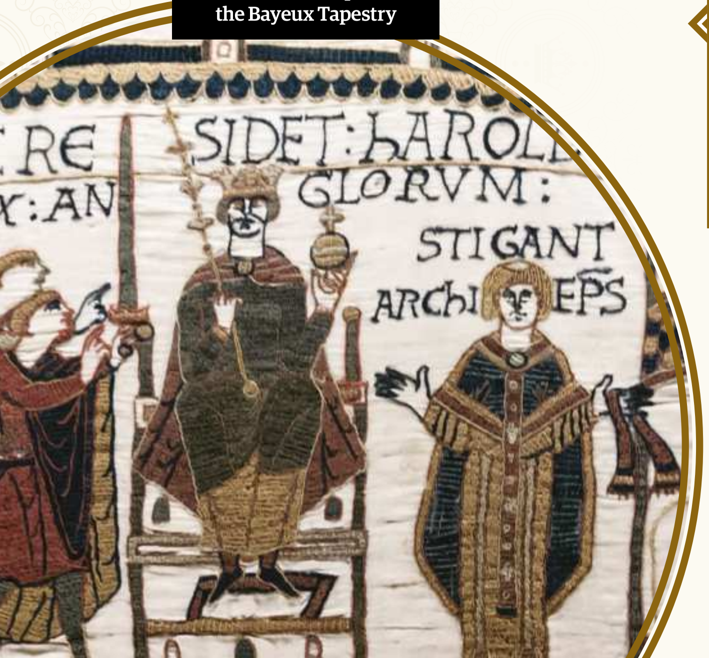
14
1042-1066
Edward the Confessor
b.1004-d.1066
The childless Edward made no public proclamation of who he wanted as heir, leaving the throne to be contested when he died in 1066.

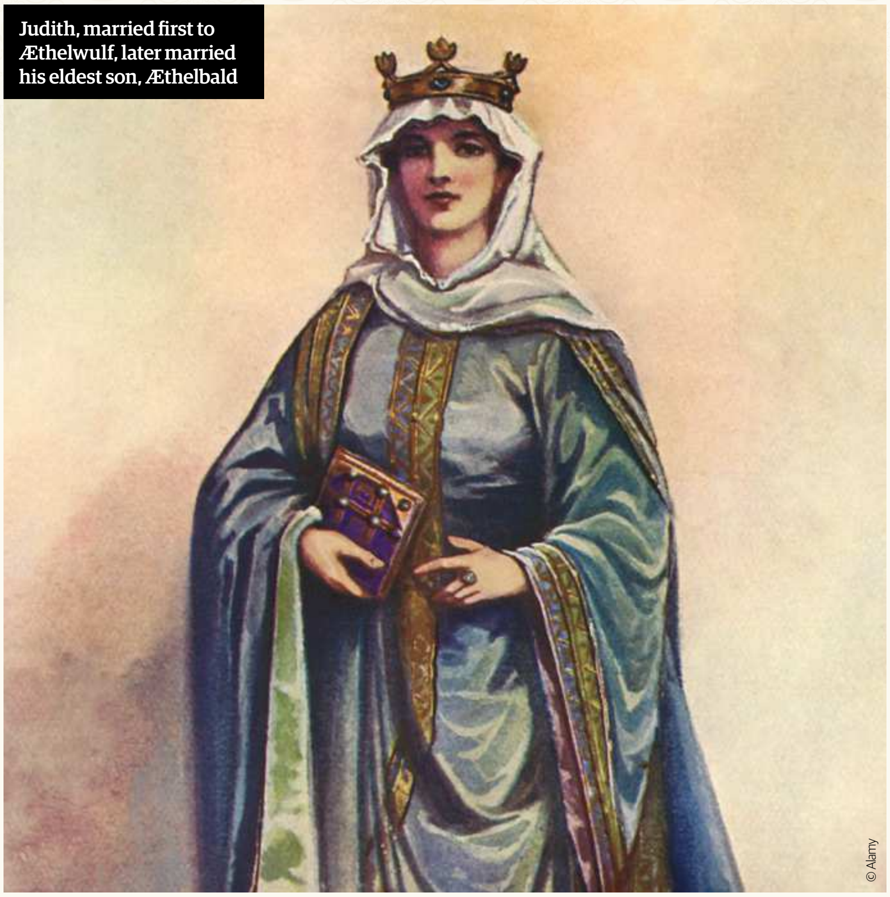
Edith of Wessex
b.1025-d.1075

Godwin, Earl of Wessex
b.1001-d.1053

Gytha Thorkelsdottir
b.997-d.1069

15
1066-1066
Harold Godwinson
b.1022-d.1066
While his sister was married to the king, Harold himself had no direct claim on the throne. Nevertheless, he claimed it when Edward died.


The coronation of Harold Godwinson, as depicted in the Bayeux Tapestry



Judith, married first to Æthelwulf, later married his eldest son, Æthelbald

© Alamy

Judith

b.843-d.870

The queen who married father & son

King Æthelwulf's wife, the mother of Alfred and his brothers, died around 854, leaving the king without a queen. So he found one: Judith, daughter of Charles the Bald, king of the Franks. No matter that she was barely a teenager and Æthelwulf probably in his 50s: this was a political marriage to cement an alliance and to sprinkle some Carolingian glamour – Charles the Bald was the grandson of Charlemagne – on the House of Wessex.

However, two years after the marriage, Æthelwulf died. With her husband dead, 15-year-old Judith could have returned to her father but, displaying the independence of spirit that would mark out the rest of her life, Judith did no such thing. She wanted to remain a queen and there was one way of doing so: she married Æthelbald, her late husband's son and the new king of Wessex. The decision outraged the ten-year-old Alfred and Church leaders considered the marriage incestuous. But Judith would not back down. However, Æthelbald was not as long lived as his father and died in 860; Judith was a widow again.

Judith returned to her father's court, as neither marriage had produced any children. She was welcomed back by Charles, who cast around for a new husband. But Judith was unwilling to wait; early in 862, she eloped with Baldwin, Count of Flanders. Her father was furious. He petitioned the pope for their excommunication, and they were cast from the Church. But this resourceful couple marshalled diplomatic support and had the excommunication lifted. In the end, Charles accepted Baldwin. Judith had two sons by Baldwin and, bringing the story almost full circle, many years later, one of her boys married Alfred's daughter, Ælfthryth.

Alfred the Great

b.849-d.899 ♛ King of Wessex: 871-899

Killing for the crown

There's only one English king called 'the Great' and it's Alfred. But when Alfred was growing up, he would never have expected to become king: he had four older brothers. However, when the Vikings landed in East Anglia in 865, intent on conquest, being king would prove to be a shortcut to an early death.

With three of his brothers dead, Alfred lined up alongside his last remaining brother, King Æthelred, to inflict the first significant defeat on the Great Heathen Army at the Battle of Ashdown on 8 January 871. But by April, Æthelred was dead – possibly from wounds suffered – and Alfred was king. In this year of battles, Alfred fought nine major engagements against the Vikings, losing most of them, but managing to salvage his men and his life. For the Vikings, who fought for profit, Alfred's resistance was cutting too deeply into their margins. They cut a deal.

If Alfred thought he'd bought peace, he was disabused of this notion five years later when the Vikings launched renewed attacks. By 876, Wessex was the last kingdom of the Anglo-Saxons: the Vikings had conquered Northumbria, East Anglia and Mercia. Alfred fought them to a treaty but, as he settled down to celebrate Christmas and the New Year of 878, the Vikings launched a surprise attack on his estate at Chippenham and Alfred had to flee for his life.

The last kingdom had fallen.

Hiding out in the marshes of the Somerset Levels, Alfred embarked on a series of hit-and-run raids against the Vikings. Then, in May 878, Alfred emerged from hiding and summoned the men of Wessex. They came, in their hundreds and thousands. The Vikings finally had Alfred in the open. Win this battle and the country was theirs.

On a date between 6 and 12 May, Alfred faced the Great Heathen Army at Edington in Wiltshire. It was possibly the single most crucial battle in English history, and Alfred won. What Alfred did after victory gave further sign of how different he was from the usual run of kings. When the Viking leader, besieged and starving, surrendered, Alfred did not execute him on the spot. Instead, he let him live, on condition that he be baptised – with Alfred standing as his godfather – and return to the rule of East Anglia as his vassal.

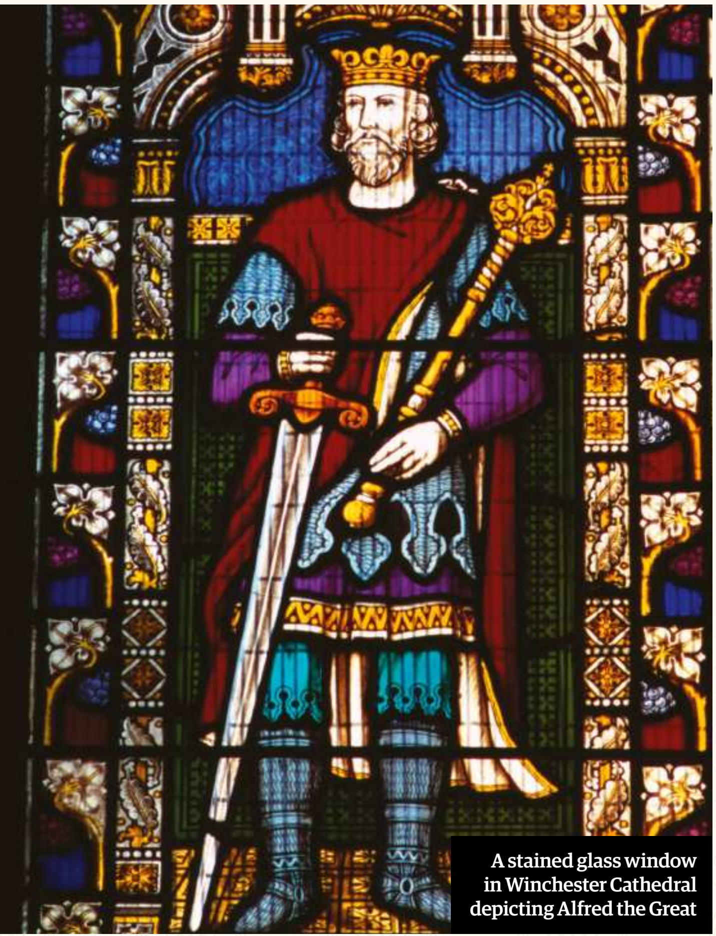
Although he had neutralised this threat, Alfred knew that there would be others, so he set about the renewal and restoration of a devastated kingdom. To protect his people against further raids, he created a network of fortified towns and strongholds, placed throughout his kingdom to guard roads and rivers, and so arranged that all his subjects were within a day's march of safety. He

> “What Alfred did after victory gave further sign of how different he was”

organised a standing army and created a navy with ships made to his own design. What’s more, Alfred set about a programme of cultural and spiritual renewal, bringing in scholars from far afield to teach and instituting a series of translations of important works into English, so that all might read them. Setting his own mind to the grind of translation, Alfred learned Latin and set to translating himself, sometimes inserting his own reflections into the translation. Thus we have the king’s own thoughts on the art of kingship and the responsibilities of power - you would search for hundreds of years previously and afterwards before finding another king who applied himself in such a fashion.

And, yes, the Vikings did return, in 893. But Alfred’s reforms, and the armies led by him, his able son, Edward, and his son-in-law, Æthelred, ruler of the Mercians, harried the Viking armies, leaving them no safe place to settle so that, after 896, they gave up their fruitless campaigning and withdrew.

In 899, Alfred, England’s greatest king, died.



A stained glass window in Winchester Cathedral depicting Alfred the Great

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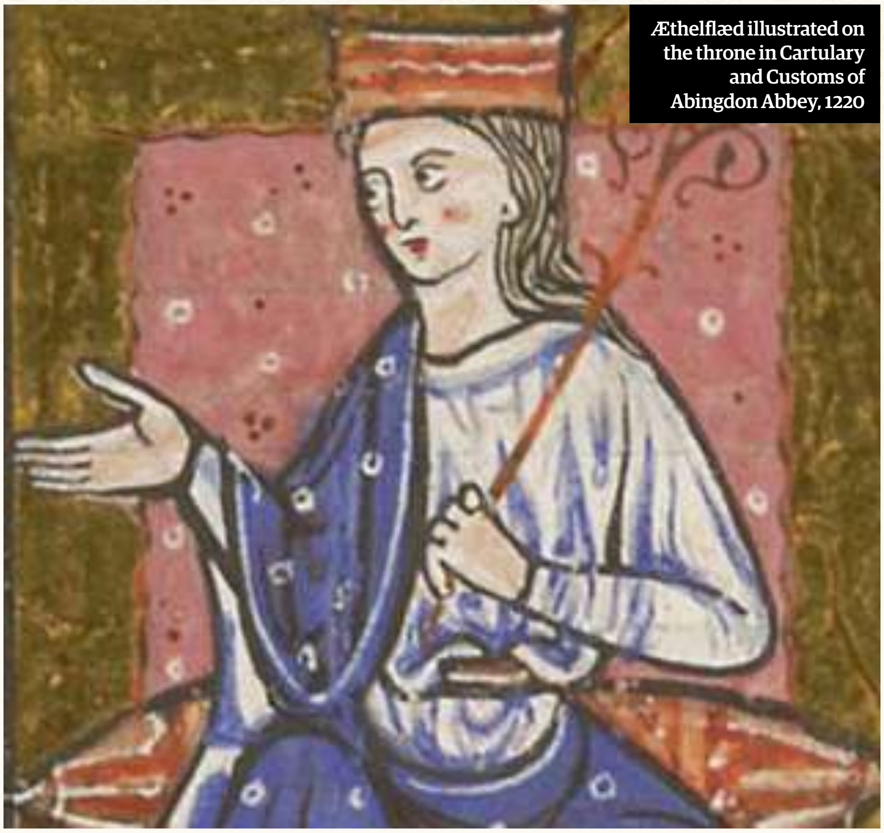


Æthelflæd illustrated on the throne in Cartulary and Customs of Abingdon Abbey, 1220

Æthelflæd

b.870-d.918 ♛ Lady of the Mercians: 911-918

The warrior queen

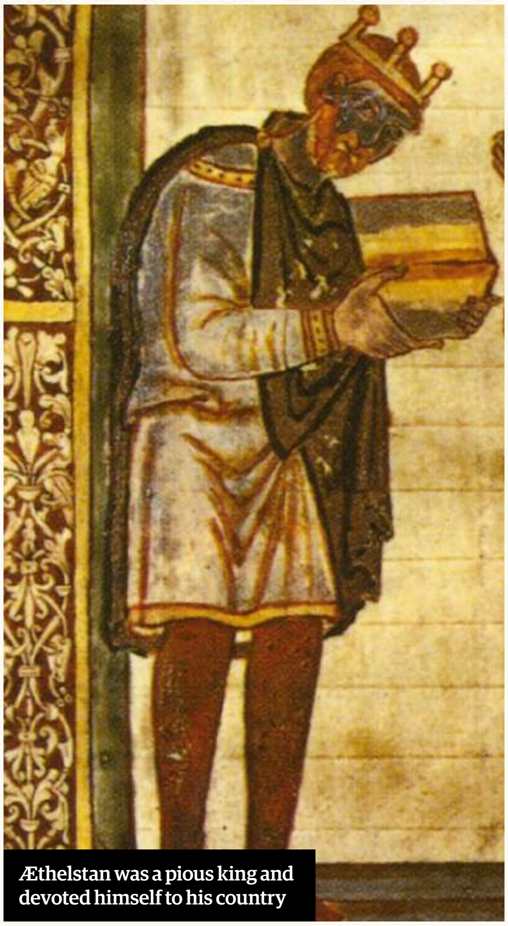
Alfred was an extraordinary man and he had extraordinary children, in particular his eldest son, Edward, and his first-born child, Æthelflæd. Sister and brother grew up through the wars against the Vikings and knew it would be their part to continue the struggle.

Alfred married his daughter to the man he’d entrusted with the rulership of Mercia, under Alfred’s overlordship. But when the lord of the Mercians was incapacitated by illness in the early 10th century, Æthelflæd became de-facto ruler in his place and, when he died in 911, she was accepted as the ruler of Mercia, recorded in contemporary charters as Æthelflæd, Lady of the Mercians. Thus Æthelflæd became the only woman who ruled an Anglo-Saxon kingdom.

With her brother, Edward, king of Wessex following Alfred’s death in 899, the siblings launched the systematic reconquest of the Danelaw, those parts of England that Alfred had ceded to the Vikings as theirs to rule. Æthelflæd prepared for the campaign by extending the network of fortified strongholds and towns that her father and brother had made through Wessex into Mercia. Then, from 909 onwards, Æthelflæd and Edward maintained constant pressure on the Danes, establishing control by erecting new strongholds as they advanced.

But Æthelflæd, like her father, was no mere warrior: she advanced learning and scholarship throughout her kingdom, endowing and protecting monasteries throughout her reign.

In 917, Æthelflæd and Edward beat back Viking counterattacks, and then Æthelflæd’s forces took Derby, the first of the Five Boroughs of the Danelaw to fall to the Anglo-Saxons. Next year, Leicester surrendered and York pledged to Æthelflæd, but the Lady of the Mercians died - on 12 June 918 - before she could take the city. Æthelflæd’s daughter succeeded her but Edward deposed his niece and took direct control of Mercia. England was struggling towards unity.


Æthelstan was a pious king and devoted himself to his country

Æthelstan

b.894-d.939 ♛ 1760-1820

The first king of England

Æthelstan was Alfred the Great's grandson. The old king saw something in the boy and had him invested when still very young with cloak, belt and sword. Æthelstan was Edward the Elder's oldest son, but by a woman little attested in our sources: Æthelstan may have been illegitimate or his mother of low birth. As such, there was rivalry between him and Edward's children by his two queens, and Æthelstan was brought up at the court of Edward's remarkable sister, Æthelflæd.

On Edward's death, Æthelstan succeeded to the throne of Mercia but a half brother, Ælfweard, was to be king of Wessex - but Ælfweard died 16 days after his father. Not surprisingly, there was some resistance in Wessex towards accepting Æthelstan as king, particularly after such a conveniently timed death. But Æthelstan's decision not to marry - thus ensuring his successor would come from the descendants of Edward's children with his queens - eased his acceptance. The decision may also have reflected Æthelstan's character: in common with his grandfather, Æthelstan was an intensely religious man.

But it is Æthelstan's achievement in bringing all of England under his rule that marked him out as an exceptional king. Æthelstan took the Viking-ruled north, centred on York, in 927, making him the first king to rule all the old Anglo-Saxon kingdoms: Wessex, Mercia, East Anglia and Northumbria - the first king of England.

However, the kings of the surrounding lands eyed this rising power nervously and allied to bring Æthelstan down. Constantine, king of the Scots, Olaf Guthfrithson, king of Dublin, and Owain, king of Strathclyde, attacked England. The forces met at the Battle of Brunanburh in 937. It was a decisive victory for Æthelstan and for the idea of England. If Æthelstan had lost, the newly united country would have been dismembered. Instead, England endured.

Elfrida

b.945-d.1000

The wicked queen

Was Elfrida the wicked queen of later legend? Certainly, her name might have been blackened by those attacking her son, Æthelred, but enough doubt exists to suggest that she was far from blameless in the bloody, murderous events of her time.

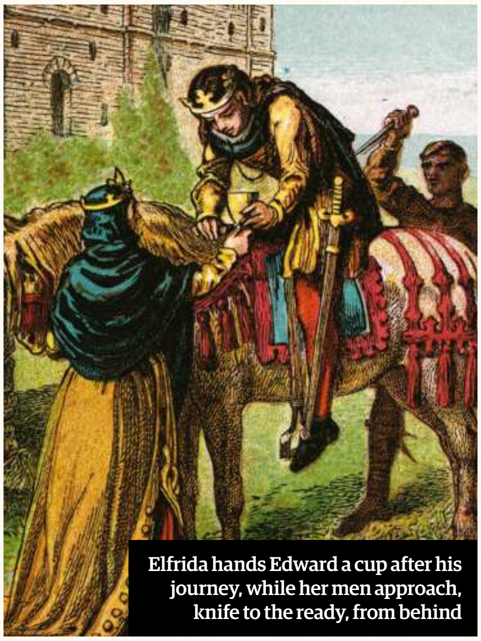
One chronicler tells of how King Edgar, hearing of Elfrida's beauty, sent a retainer to see if she was quite as beautiful as people said. The retainer, smitten, married Elfrida himself while telling the king that the reports of her beauty were greatly exaggerated. But when word reached Edgar that Elfrida was indeed the beauty she was reputed to be, he announced he would visit. Elfrida's husband asked her to make herself ugly, but Elfrida did no such thing and the king was besotted in turn, arranging for the husband to meet with a convenient accident during a hunt. Widowed, Elfrida was free to marry the king.

But Edgar already had a son from a previous marriage. So when Elfrida gave birth to a son, Æthelred, in 968, his half-brother, Edward, who was six years older, stood in the path to the throne.

Edgar died in 975; Edward was 13, Æthelred just seven. Not surprisingly, Edward was crowned king. But three years later, when Edward came to visit his stepmother and half-brother at Corfe Castle, their stronghold in Dorset, the young king was pulled from his horse and murdered. The earliest accounts are sparse in their detail, although all agree Edward was hurriedly buried, without any royal honours.

Did Elfrida plot the death of the king? Certainly Æthelred was too young to have been involved. The chroniclers who accused Elfrida of the crime wrote many years later, but with Edward dead, Æthelred was the only possible monarch. For contemporaries, it must have seemed the lesser of two evils to draw a veil over Elfrida's possible involvement in regicide, rather than implicate the king. But there is one telling detail that points to Elfrida's guilt: she had legal authority over the case, yet no one was ever tried for Edward's murder.

So it is likely Æthelred came to the throne by murder. The blood guilt of this crime was played out through the following generations, culminating in the conquest of 1066.


Elfrida hands Edward a cup after his journey, while her men approach, knife to the ready, from behind

© Topfoto

Æthelred the Unready

b.968-d.1016 ♛ 978-1013, 1014-1016

England's worst king... probably

The nickname that has applied to Æthelred for centuries comes from the Old English, Unræd, and means not that he was unprepared, but that he was ill-advised, and is a play on his Christian name, which means 'noble counsel'. The people always preferred to place the blame for the calamities that befell them through Æthelred's long reign on the men around the king rather than the king himself. Æthelred, ever one to pass the buck, was likely all too happy to allow his councillors to take the blame. He even managed to escape the blame for how he came to the throne in the first place.

On the death of his father, Edgar the Peaceful, in 975, Æthelred's elder half brother, Edward, took the throne. Edward reigned for three years until he made the mistake of visiting his half-brother and step-mother, Elfrida, at Corfe Castle. When Edward arrived, he was greeted by Æthelred's men but then, before the king could dismount, they grabbed his arms, immobilising him, and stabbed Edward to death. Æthelred was only ten, so could not have been responsible for Edward's murder. Besides, there weren't any other alternatives. Æthelred became king, first ruling with the support of a council of leading men and his formidable mother.

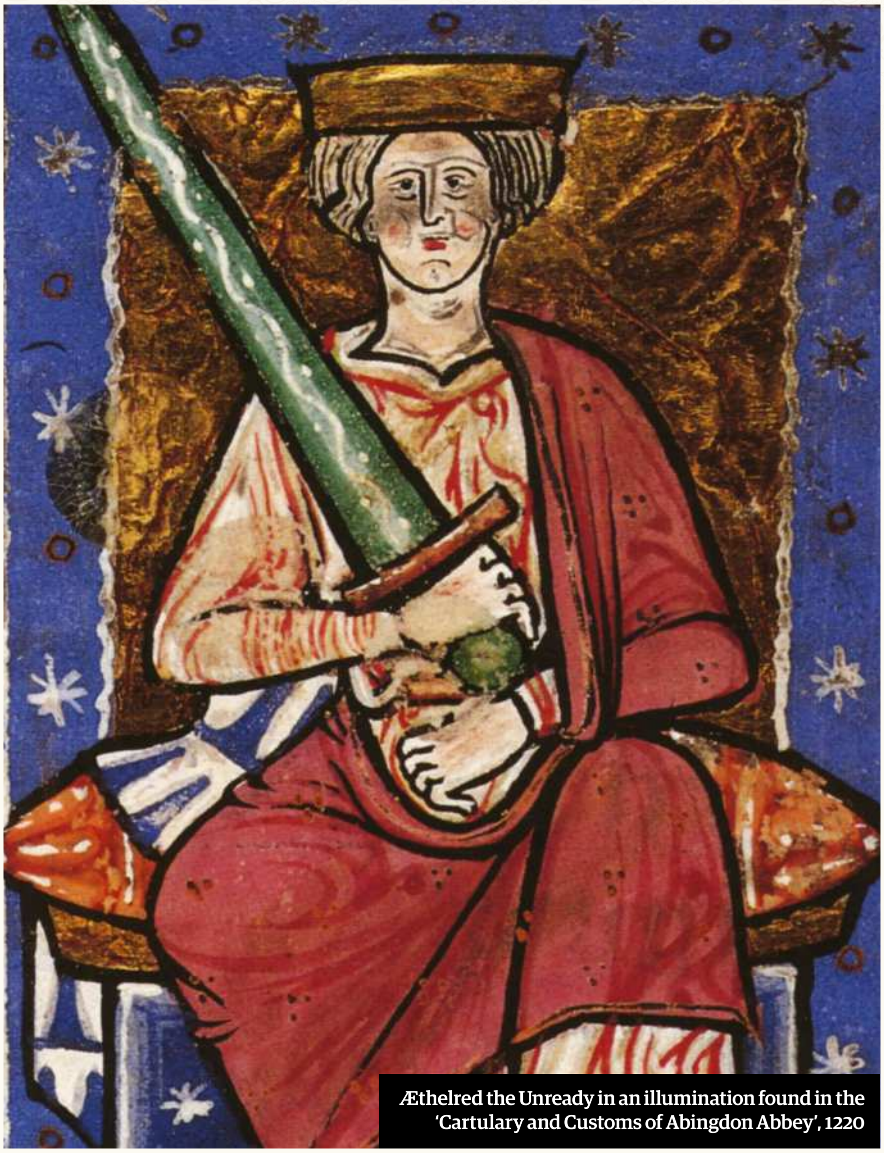
The early years of Æthelred's reign saw considerable reform and, indeed, if left in peace he might have gone down in history as a good king save for the circumstances of his taking the throne. But this was not to be the case. After a hundred years of peace, the Vikings were back.

Following small raids in the 980s, a major fleet appeared in 991 and defeated an English army near Maldon. Showing that the English, even then, liked nothing better than glorifying a valiant defeat, the battle was commemorated in the Old English poem The Battle of Maldon, which tells how the liege men of Byrhtnoth made the decision to fight to the death alongside their fallen lord.

One defeat was enough. Æthelred paid off the Vikings. This first time, the cost of peace was 10,000 pounds. The Danes took the money and then returned for more next year and the year after. Second time round, the cost had risen to 22,000 pounds The third time, it was 24,000. The fourth, 36,000. The fifth, 48,000. Æthelred had inherited the most efficient tax-gathering government in Europe, and he milked the realm to pay the Danes. But where others before him had paid Vikings to buy time, Æthelred appeared to have no other strategy: Æthelred never faced the Vikings in battle.

What he did do was enter an alliance with Duke Richard of Normandy to try to deny Viking fleets safe harbour across the Channel: to cement the alliance, the recently widowed Æthelred married the duke's sister, Emma, starting the relationship with Normandy that would play out, two generations later, in the second conquest of England.

The second, because by 1013, the English were a thoroughly demoralised people, ripe for invasion, and King Sweyn Forkbeard of Denmark duly obliged. Æthelred fled into exile. But then, on 3 February 1014, Sweyn Forkbeard, with the country beneath his whiskers, died. Æthelred returned, promising to rule better, but the murder of two earls by his favoured councillor, Eadric Streona, showed nothing had changed. Sweyn's son, Cnut, returned at the head of a new invasion fleet and Æthelred finally did something for his country: he died, leaving his son, Edmund Ironside to lead the fight.


Æthelred the Unready in an illumination found in the 'Cartulary and Customs of Abingdon Abbey', 1220

> "One defeat was enough. Æthelred paid off the Vikings"

Emma of Normandy

b.985-d.1052

The three-time queen

Emma married Æthelred in 1002, becoming queen of England and producing two sons, Edward and Alfred. When Æthelred fled the country in the face of the Viking invasion, Emma left with her boys too, although, in a telling commentary on her marriage, she made her own way to Normandy. When Æthelred died, his son, Edmund Ironside, led the fight against Cnut. But when Edmund died, Cnut needed to shore up the legitimacy of his claim to the throne, and what better way to do that than by marrying the queen?

Many years later, Emma commissioned her version of these events; by her telling, Cnut wooed her back to England and into marriage with gifts and promises. Given the political nature of such a match, Emma may not have had much of a choice in the matter, but power mattered to the queen, and she was willing to make sacrifices to keep it. The children of her first marriage, Edward and Alfred, were left behind in Normandy while Emma set about producing a new heir to the throne with Cnut. According to her book, the political marriage became a true partnership and contemporary records bear this out: Emma had far higher status as Cnut's queen than she had ever enjoyed as Æthelred's wife.

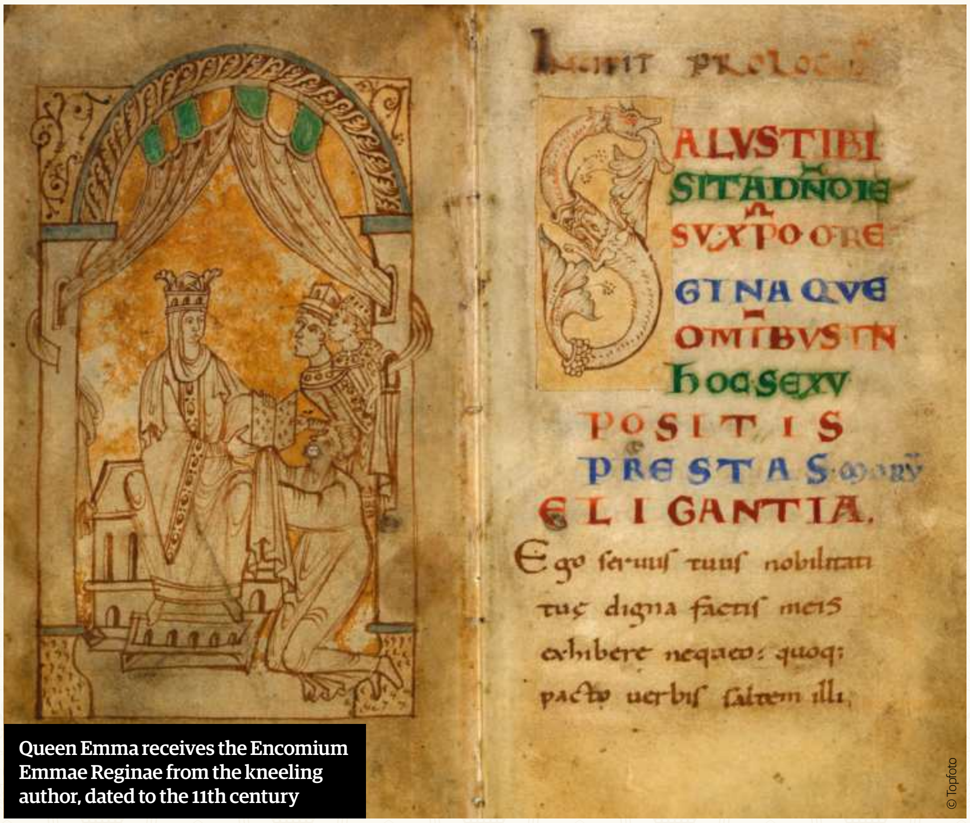
When Cnut died in 1035, the succession seemed clear: surely it would go to Harthacnut, his son with Emma. But Cnut had produced another son, Harold Harefoot, with his first wife, and Harold Harefoot was on hand to claim the throne, while Harthacnut sought to defend his interests elsewhere in Cnut's northern empire. Emma's struggle on her son's behalf was helped by Earl Godwin, an Englishman whom Cnut had raised to one of the highest ranks in the land. But when Godwin defected to Harold Harefoot's side, Emma remembered that she had another two sons, just over the Channel, who also had claim on the throne. Edward tried, but his tentative invasion failed. Then it was Alfred's turn. Earl Godwin met him, feasted the young prince and his followers, put them up for the night and then set upon them: Alfred's men were variously sold into slavery, murdered, mutilated, blinded and scalped. Alfred himself was not killed but his eyes were put out, wounds from which he failed to recover.

> “Power mattered to the queen, and she was willing to make sacrifices”

With Godwin on his side, Harold Harefoot became king and Emma went into exile again, seeking refuge not in Normandy – where presumably Edward might have had some pointed questions about his mother's recent conduct – but in Flanders. Ever the survivor, she swiftly returned to favour when Harold Harefoot died and Harthacnut took belated control of England in 1040. Having reacquainted herself with Edward, Emma worked for his return to England in 1041. And return he did but, remarkably, he returned to act as co-king alongside his half-brother, with Emma the third person of a ruling trinity. This arrangement was likely made to shore up Harthacnut's increasingly unpopular reign.

Harthacnut died in 1042 and, in 1043, Edward moved against his mother, appearing unexpectedly at her power base in Winchester and depriving Emma of her treasures. Edward, for one, had not forgotten what had happened to his younger brother, nor the way Emma had abandoned him in Normandy. Although Emma was allowed to retain her base in Winchester and Edward accepted her back to court, her power had been broken.

Besides, there was another power behind Edward's throne: Earl Godwin and his family. Despite Godwin's role in his brother's death, Edward married his daughter. From Winchester, Emma, that consummate player of the political game, must have thought the future set, but it did not work out like that. Emma did not live to see the final playing out of the events set in motion by her marriage to Æthelred. She died in 1052, the wife and mother of kings.



Queen Emma receives the Encomium Emmae Reginae from the kneeling author, dated to the 11th century

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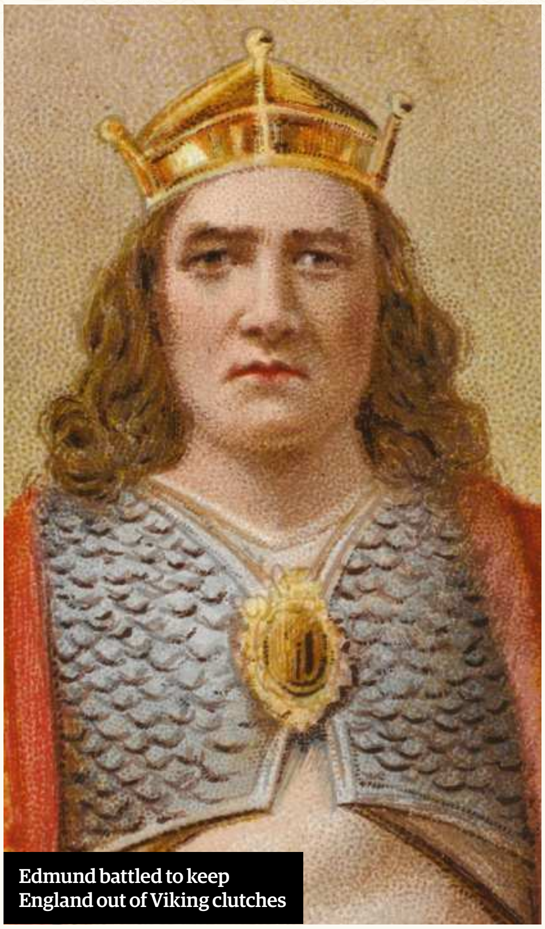

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Edmund battled to keep England out of Viking clutches

Edmund Ironside

b.993-d.1016 ♛ 1016

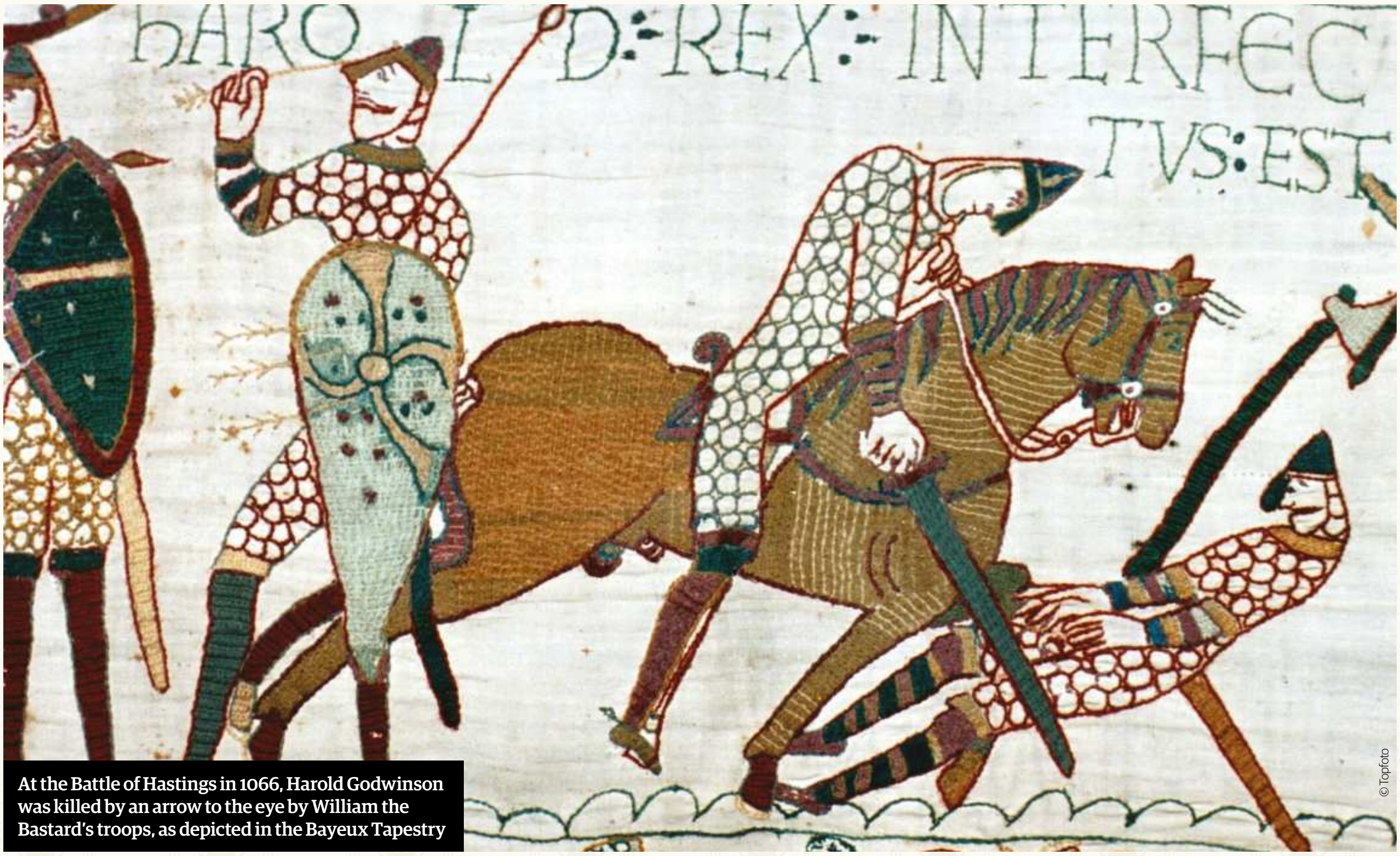
The king who fought and lost

Edmund was Æthelred's third son by his first wife. When Æthelred remarried Emma of Normandy and produced a further two boys, Edmund must have been concerned they would claim the throne ahead of him. But, first, there had to be a throne to claim.

When Æthelred fled into exile after Sweyn Forkbeard's invasion in 1013, Edmund stayed behind. When Sweyn died in 1014, Edmund was in position to help his father return and reclaim the throne. But Æthelred proved ineffective when Sweyn's son, Cnut, launched a new invasion in 1015. Edmund raised an army but, when Æthelred failed to appear to lead it, the army disbanded. Edmund raised another, which fared worse: Æthelred did turn up to lead it.

Finally, on 23 April 1016, Æthelred died and Edmund was crowned king. Determined to fight the Vikings, Edmund raised an army and fought Cnut's forces through summer and autumn, pushing the Danes back until he met them in the decisive battle of the war, at Assandun in Essex on 16 October. There, his father's chief councillor, Eadric Streona, betrayed Edmund and the English were decisively defeated. Edmund survived the battle but was forced to negotiate with Cnut, agreeing to split the country, with Edmund taking Wessex and Cnut Mercia. But a few weeks later, Edmund died.

With Edmund dead, the whole country fell under the rule of Cnut and one of his first acts was to execute Eadric Streona. A year after Edmund's death, Cnut visited his tomb and placed upon it a cloak, embroidered with peacocks, symbolising salvation. Unlike his forebear Alfred, Edmund was unable to save his nation, and for the next 26 years, it would be under Danish rule.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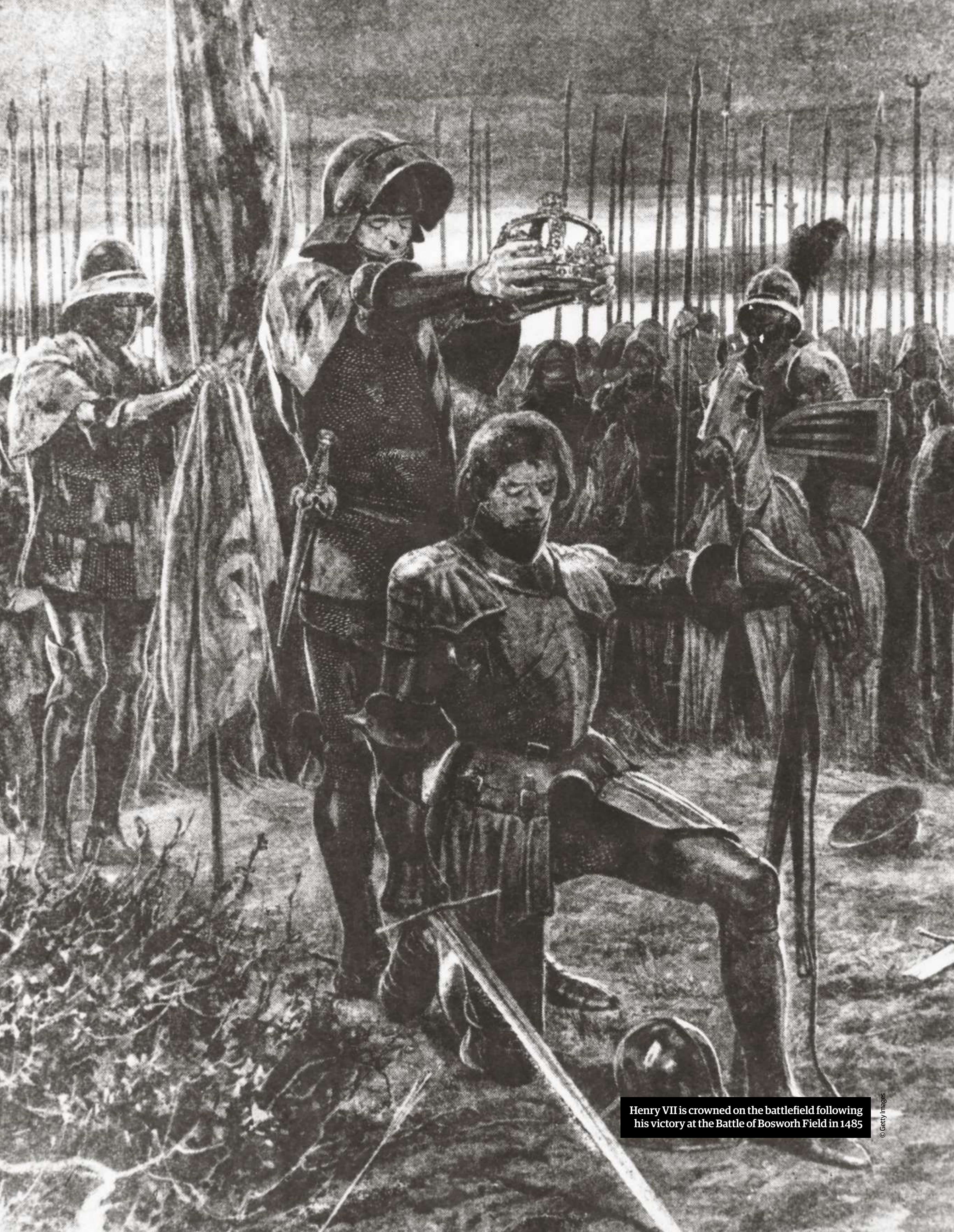
At the Battle of Hastings in 1066, Harold Godwinson was killed by an arrow to the eye by William the Bastard's troops, as depicted in the Bayeux Tapestry

© Getty Images



Henry VII is crowned on the battlefield following his victory at the Battle of Bosworh Field in 1485

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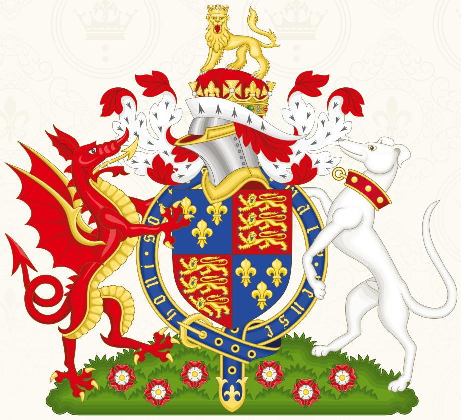


TUDOR

1485-1603

The obscure Henry Tudor won the crown in battle, with his dynasty reigning for over one hundred tumultuous years

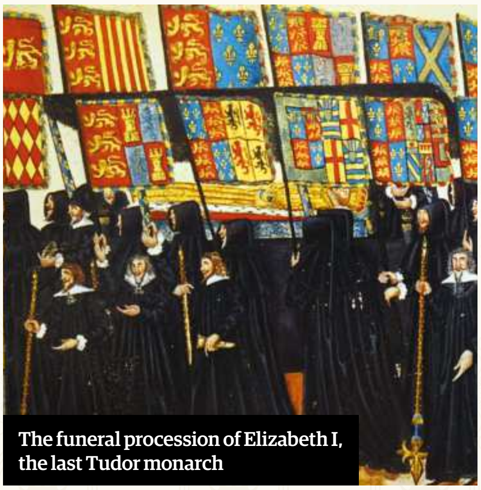
Words ELIZABETH NORTON

The House of Tudor is remembered as the most colourful dynasty ever to rule in England. It also had one of the shakiest claims to the throne, with the obscure Welsh exile, Henry Tudor, winning a lucky victory on the battlefield in August 1485. He took the throne as Henry VII, cementing his position through marriage to Princess Elizabeth of York. The couple founded a dynasty that would rule for nearly 120 years.

Although Henry VII hoped to leave the crown to his eldest son, Prince Arthur, it was his second son, Henry VIII, who succeeded in 1509. Henry is the most well-known of any British monarch, famous for breaking the English church from Rome and instigating the Reformation and infamous for his succession of six luckless wives. His reign also saw a number of well-known figures - including Cardinal Wolsey, the son of an Ipswich butcher - virtually running England for years. Thomas Cromwell, a Putney blacksmith's son, presided over the dissolution of the monasteries.

Henry believed that he had left the dynasty secure in the person of his nine-year-old son, Edward VI, but the boy king died only a few years after his ascent to the throne. Edward had been a fanatical Protestant and hoped to leave the crown to his equally Protestant cousin, Lady Jane Grey. He failed to account for the popularity of his half-sister, Mary, who swept to the throne on a wave of popular support. Her attempts to return England to Catholicism soon proved less popular and bonfires were lit to celebrate her death in 1558.

The last Tudor monarch was arguably the greatest. Elizabeth I, who declined to marry and produce an heir, presided over a period of exploration and culture, as well as bringing a measure of religious stability with her Protestant religious settlement. The dynasty, which was born on the battlefield in 1485, ended with Elizabeth's death in March 1603.



The funeral procession of Elizabeth I, the last Tudor monarch

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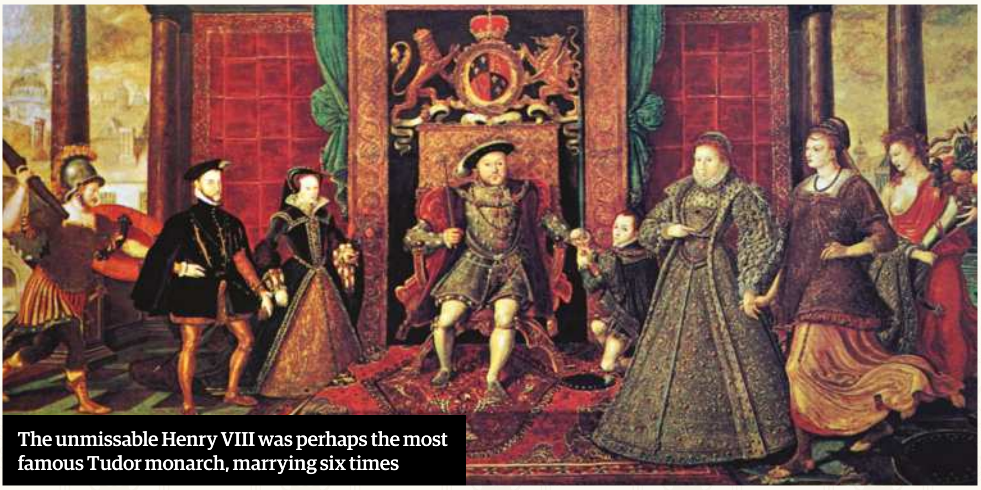

The unmissable Henry VIII was perhaps the most famous Tudor monarch, marrying six times

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The PEDIGREE

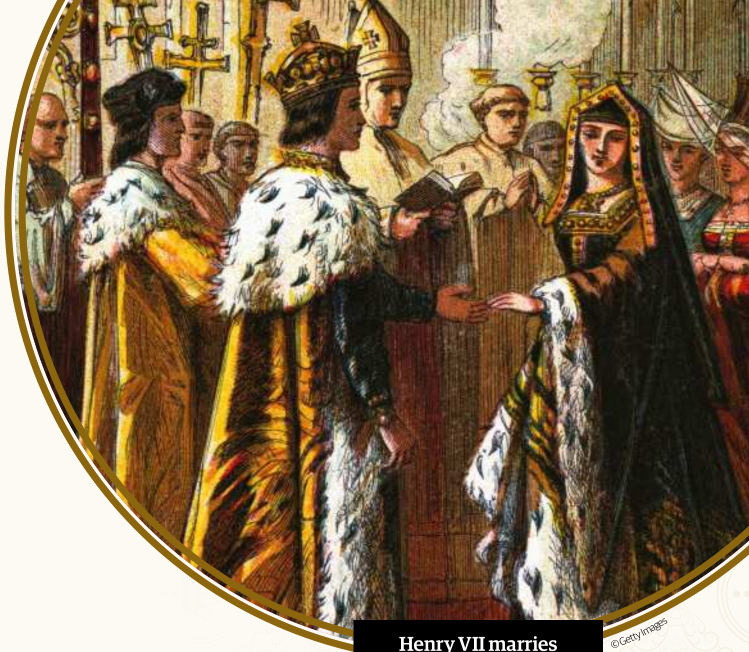
The rise and demise of England's most notorious royal family

Order of succession

Marriage

Margaret Beaufort
b.c.1443-d.1509
Henry VII's mother was descended from Edward III, providing her son with his claim to the English crown. Married four times, she gave birth to her only child when she was 13. Margaret worked to win the crown for her son. She was pious and learned, founding two Cambridge colleges.

Edmund Tudor
b.1430-d.1456


Henry VII marries Elizabeth of York in 1486

©Getty Images

1
– 1485-1509 –
Henry VII
b.1457-d.1509
Turn to page 22

Elizabeth of York
b.1466-d.1503
As Edward IV's eldest daughter, many considered Elizabeth to be heir to the throne when her brothers - the Princes in the Tower - disappeared. Henry Tudor promised to marry her if he won the English crown. The couple united the Houses of Lancaster and York, but Elizabeth played little role in government.

Arthur, Prince of Wales
b.1486-d.1502
Turn to page 22

Catherine of Aragon
b.1485-d.1536

(1) James IV of Scotland
b.1473-d.1513

Margaret Tudor
b.1489-d.1541
Turn to page 24

(3) Henry Stewart, Lord Methven
b.1495-d.1552

(2) Archibald Douglas, Earl of Angus
b.1489-d.1557

Mary Tudor, Queen of France
b.1496-d.1533
Henry VIII married his beautiful younger sister to the aged Louis XII of France. When Louis died less than three months later, Mary feared another arranged marriage. Within weeks she had secretly wed the lowborn Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, who had been sent to bring her home to England.

(1) Louis XII of France
b.1462-d.1515

(2) Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk
b.c.1484-d.1545

(2) Mary of Guise
b.1515-d.1560

James V of Scotland
b.1512-d.1542

(1) Madeleine of Valois
b.1520-d.1537

2
– 1509-1547 –
Henry VIII
b.1491-d.1547
Turn to page 23

(1) Francis II of France
b.1544-d.1560

(3) James Hepburn, Earl of Bothwell
b.1534-d.1578

Mary, Queen of Scots
b.1542-d.1587

Matthew Stewart, Earl of Lennox
b.1516-d.1571

Lady Margaret Douglas
b.1515-d.1578

(2) Henry, Lord Darnley
b.1545-d.1567

James VI & I
b.1566-d.1625

Frances Brandon
b.1517-d.1559

Henry Grey, Duke of Suffolk
b.1517-d.1554

(1) Catherine of Aragon
b.1485-d.1536
Catherine, a Spanish princess, was briefly married to Prince Arthur. She later married her husband's younger brother, Henry VIII. Only her daughter, Princess Mary, survived infancy. Catherine staunchly resisted Henry's attempts to annul their marriage. She died nearly three years after her divorce, still insisting that she was queen.

(2) Anne Boleyn
b.c.1501-d.1536
Turn to page 25

(3) Jane Seymour
b.c.1508-d.1537
The daughter of Sir John Seymour of Wolf Hall, Jane was the lowliest of all Henry VIII's wives. Religiously conservative and considered rather plain, she was a surprising choice. She was the only one of Henry's six wives to bear a surviving son, dying 12 days after the birth.

(4) Anne of Cleves
b.1515-d.1557

(5) Catherine Howard
b.c.1523-d.1542

(6) Catherine Parr
b.1512-d.1548
Catherine had been widowed twice before becoming Henry VIII's sixth wife. A devout Protestant, she was the first Englishwoman to publish a book under her own name. She also undertook the upbringing of Princess Elizabeth. She married a fourth husband soon after Henry's death and died in childbirth the following year.

5
– 1553-1558 –
Mary I
b.1516-d.1558
Turn to page 27

Philip II of Spain
b.1527-d.1598

6
– 1558-1603 –
Elizabeth I
b.1533-d.1603
Turn to page 24

3
– 1547-1553 –
Edward VI
b.c.1537-d.1553
Turn to page 26

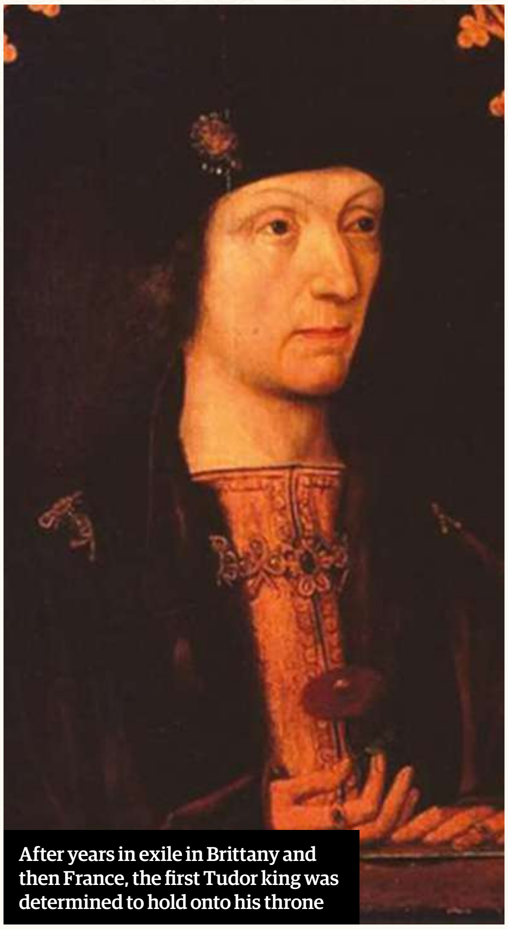
Lord Guildford Dudley
b.c.1535-d.1554

4
– 1553-1553 –
Jane Grey
b.1537-d.1554
Turn to page 27

Katherine Grey
b.1540-d.1568
Under the terms of Henry VIII's will, Katherine became heir to the throne in November 1558. She secretly married Edward Seymour, Earl of Hertford, and was imprisoned in the Tower. Although Elizabeth declared Katherine's marriage to be invalid, her two sons by Hertford remained important claimants to the crown.

Mary Grey
b.1545-d.1578

Edward Seymour Earl of Hertford
b.1539-d.1621



After years in exile in Brittany and then France, the first Tudor king was determined to hold onto his throne

Henry VII

b.1457-d.1509 ♛ 1485-1509

An upstart Welshman

When Henry Tudor was born at Pembroke in 1457, the chances of him becoming king would have seemed laughable. While his father, Edmund Tudor, Earl of Richmond, was the maternal half-brother of the Lancastrian King Henry VI, Edmund's father had been an obscure Welsh squire. Henry's father had died of the plague three months before the birth, leaving a 13-year-old widow who, as a descendant of Edward III, had a small drop of royal blood.

When Henry VI was replaced by the Yorkist king, Edward IV, in 1461, Henry Tudor's wardship was granted to William, Lord Herbert, who raised him in Wales. With Herbert's execution in 1469 and the brief reinstatement of Henry VI in 1470, the later years of Henry's childhood were tumultuous. He escaped to Brittany with his uncle, Jasper Tudor, in 1471.

The murder of Henry VI and the death in battle of his only son dramatically increased Henry Tudor's prominence. Through his mother, he suddenly became the leading Lancastrian claimant to the throne, although he had little support. This changed in 1483, when Edward IV died suddenly. His two sons were both declared illegitimate and his brother took the crown as Richard III. Many former Yorkists switched their support to Henry, particularly when he promised to marry Edward IV's eldest daughter.

Henry sailed to England with an army of mercenaries in August 1485. Gathering support, he met Richard in battle near Market Bosworth on 22 August. Amidst fierce fighting, Richard was killed and Henry took the crown as Henry VII - the first Tudor monarch.

Throughout his 25-year reign, Henry was determined to hold on to his throne. He faced several conspiracies, while he was also unpopular with much of his nobility due to his financial demands. He had a reputation for avarice, but also for shrewd political sense. Henry died in April 1509, leaving the crown to his 17-year-old son, Henry VIII.

Prince Arthur

b.1486-d.1502

The lost prince

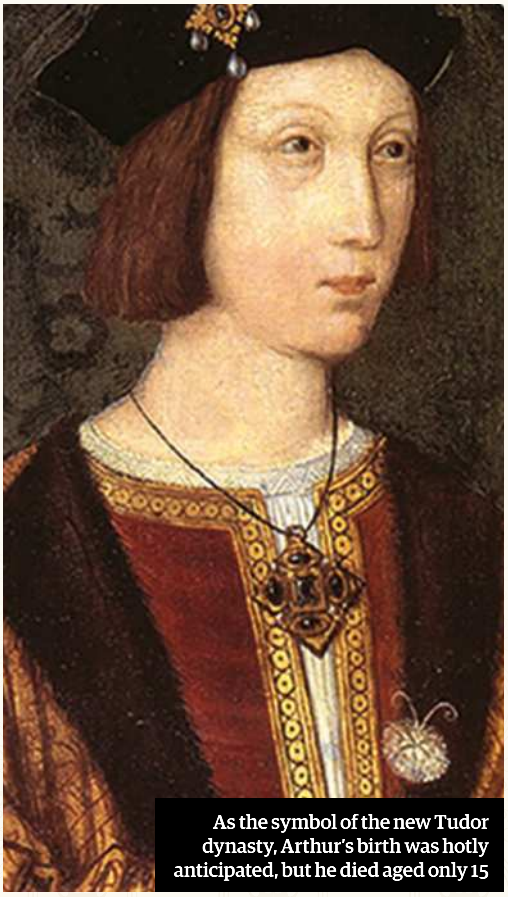
No royal birth was ever as hotly anticipated or imbued with such symbolism as Prince Arthur's, the eldest child of Henry VII and Elizabeth of York. As the living symbol of the union between the Houses of Lancaster and York, it was decided that the child should be born at Winchester, which was linked with Camelot in the period. He was also named Arthur to associate him with the mythical king.

Arthur was raised separately in his own household. He was a clever boy and provided with an excellent education. In November 1489, when he was three years old, he was created prince of Wales, while a council was soon set up to rule Wales and the Welsh Marches on his behalf.

His marriage was already being considered in 1488, with the Spanish princess, Catherine of Aragon, suggested. As the daughter of two reigning monarchs, Catherine was one of the most eligible princesses in Europe. The marriage was agreed in 1489 and a proxy betrothal ceremony followed in 1499 and again in 1500.

Catherine finally landed in England in 1501 and Arthur went with his father to meet her, escorting her back to London. The couple were married in a lavish ceremony at St Paul's Cathedral on 14 November 1501. While Arthur boasted that he had consummated his marriage on the morning after his wedding, his wife would later swear that she remained a virgin.

Following the marriage, the young couple moved to Ludlow Castle, where it was intended Arthur would rule Wales. Married life was, however, to prove brief. Both Arthur and Catherine fell ill with the sweating sickness, a uniquely Tudor disease, which was renowned for striking down the young and apparently healthy. On 2 April 1502 Arthur died at Ludlow. Once it had been established that his widow was not pregnant, his younger brother, Prince Henry, was declared heir to the throne.



As the symbol of the new Tudor dynasty, Arthur's birth was hotly anticipated, but he died aged only 15

Henry VIII

b.1491-d.1547 ♛ 1509-1547

A much-married tyrant

Few English kings have proved as memorable as Henry VIII. He was, however, never intended to be king, being born the second son of Henry VII and Elizabeth of York in 1491. Immediately after his birth he was sent to be raised with his elder sister, Margaret.

Henry's life changed suddenly in 1502 with the death of his elder brother, Prince Arthur. As prince of Wales, he was kept closely watched by his father, who was anxious for the safety of his only surviving son. He threw himself into his independence when his father died in April 1509.

Determined to prove himself as an adult monarch, one of Henry's first acts was to marry his brother's widow, Catherine of Aragon. The young couple presided over a glittering court, delighting in masques, feasting and entertainments. Henry, who stood at over six feet tall, was notably handsome, being described as having a face that would be pretty on a woman. He was also athletic, taking part in jousts and wrestling matches, as well as regularly spending days hunting in his parks.

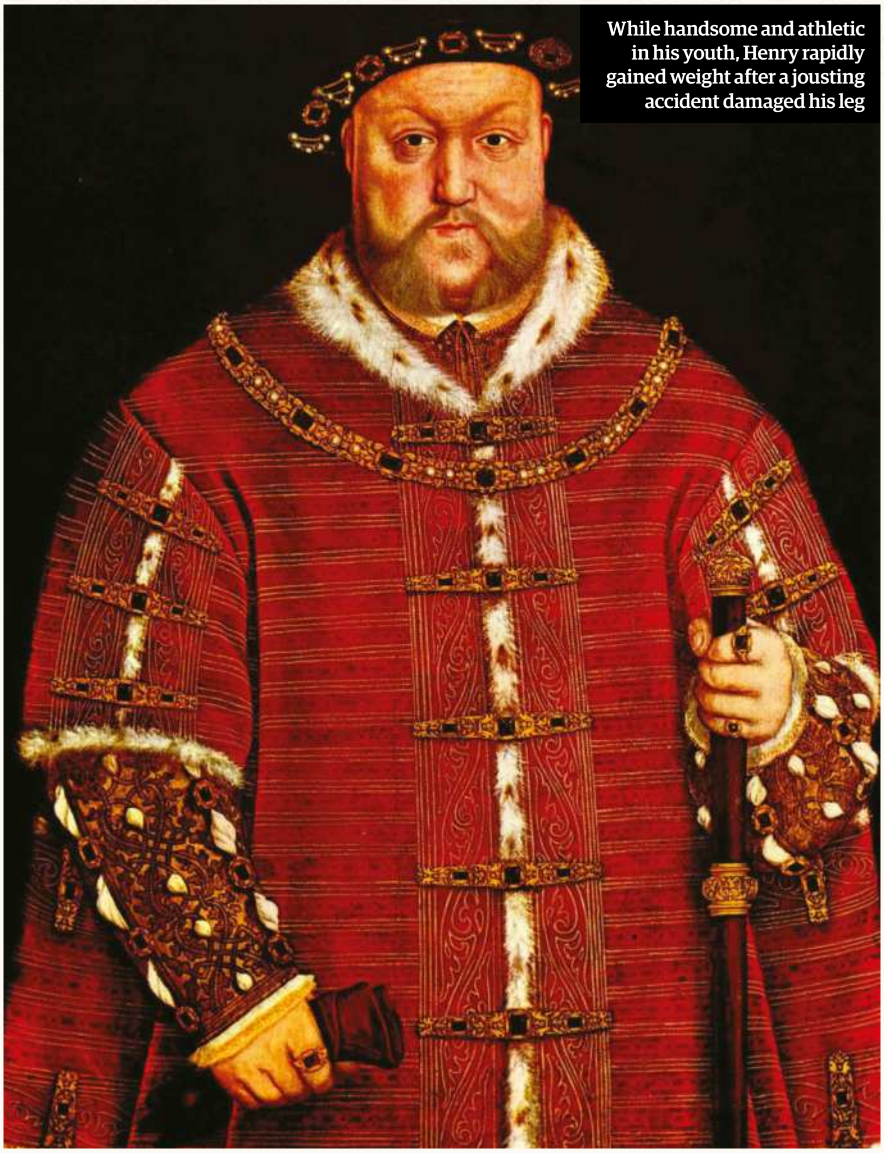
While he enjoyed the pleasures of kingship, the young Henry VIII was less eager to carry out the day-to-day affairs of government. He therefore relied heavily on his Lord Chancellor, Cardinal Wolsey, who was soon regarded as having more authority than the king.

Henry and Catherine were initially happy, but the loss of all but one of their children soured the relationship. Catherine, who was more than five years older than Henry, failed to become pregnant after 1518. Only a few months later, in the summer of 1519, Henry proved that he could father a healthy son with the birth of Henry Fitzroy to his mistress, Bessie Blount. By 1527 Henry had become infatuated with Anne Boleyn, who was a member of his wife's household, and he resolved to end his marriage.

Unfortunately, a papal annulment was not forthcoming due to the opposition of Catherine's powerful nephew, the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V. As the years passed, Henry began to look for other solutions. He became increasingly anti-papal and, in 1533, broke the English church away from Rome, having already declared himself Supreme Head of the Church of England. Although far from a Protestant, Henry's religious policy was at times radical, moving the English church away from Roman Catholicism. He also dissolved the English monasteries, something which filled the royal coffers but also sparked a northern rebellion in 1536.

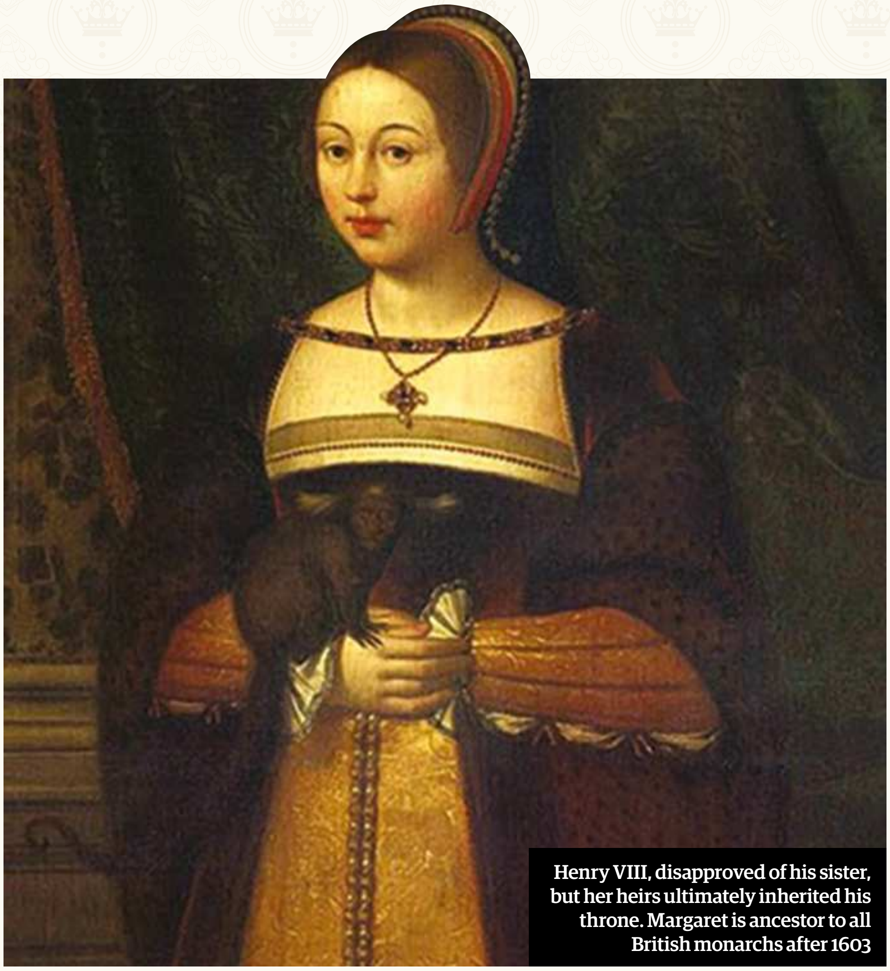
Henry's second marriage to Anne Boleyn proved no more successful than his first and, in May 1536, he had her executed on trumped-up charges of adultery. Within days he had married Jane Seymour, with this third wife dying in childbirth the following year. Unsurprisingly, given his reputation as a husband, it took the king some time to find a fourth wife, marrying the German princess Anne of Cleves in 1540. Henry took an instant dislike to his bride on meeting her and annulled the marriage after six months. His next bride was Catherine Howard, one of Anne's waiting women, who was later found not to have been a virgin at her marriage. Even more damagingly, she was strongly suspected of adultery. After her beheading, Henry married his sixth wife, Catherine Parr, but even she came close to arrest for heresy in 1546.

As his reign progressed Henry, who suffered from a painfully ulcered leg, became increasingly obese and immobile. His temper suffered and he is remembered now largely for tyranny. He died in January 1547, leaving the crown to his nine-year-old son by Jane Seymour.



While handsome and athletic in his youth, Henry rapidly gained weight after a jousting accident damaged his leg

> "It took the king some time to find a fourth wife"



Henry VIII, disapproved of his sister, but her heirs ultimately inherited his throne. Margaret is ancestor to all British monarchs after 1603

Margaret Tudor

b.1489-d.1541

A much-married queen

Margaret was the first princess born to the royal house of Tudor. She was married by proxy to James IV of Scotland in January 1503, setting out for her new kingdom in June of that year.

While Henry VIII was fighting in France in 1513, James IV invaded England. He, and much of the Scottish nobility, were killed in the Battle of Flodden on 9 September 1513, leaving Margaret's one-year-old son king of Scotland. Margaret was named as regent to James V.

While serving as regent, Margaret became close to Archibald Douglas, Earl of Angus, who was young and handsome, but far from politically astute. The couple married in secret in August 1514. This proved to be a political disaster for Margaret, who lost the regency and custody of her son as the Scottish nobility turned against her. Heavily pregnant, she escaped over the border to England, giving birth to a daughter – Margaret Douglas – in Northumberland in October 1515. Once she was well enough, Margaret was escorted south to her brother's court. She returned to Scotland in 1517.

Margaret's marriage to Angus was unhappy, particularly when she discovered that he had taken a mistress. By 1518 she was actively seeking a divorce from her second husband, a course of action that scandalised her brother who was then still married to his first wife. She was finally divorced in 1527, taking a new husband – Henry Stewart – early the following year. Within a few years she was also seeking a divorce from him, although her son blocked her suit.

Margaret, who died in 1541, proved to be one of the most important figures in British royal history. Her surviving son, James V, produced only a daughter, Mary, Queen of Scots, while her daughter, Margaret Douglas, was the mother of Henry, Lord Darnley. Margaret's two grandchildren later married and were the parents of James VI of Scots and I of England.

Elizabeth I

b.1533-d.1603 ♛ 1558-1603

The virgin queen

Elizabeth was acknowledged as heir to the throne following her birth in September 1533, but the daughter of Anne Boleyn was declared illegitimate after her mother's execution. She returned to court on her father's sixth marriage to Catherine Parr and was restored to the English succession.

With the unexpected death of her half-brother in July 1553, Elizabeth became heir to the throne. She attended her half-sister's coronation, but the two women had a troubled relationship. When Mary suspected Elizabeth of involvement in a rebellion against her, she imprisoned her in the Tower for a time. Elizabeth was at Hatfield on 17 November 1558 when she was informed that Mary had died, declaring that "this is the Lord's doing. It is marvellous in our eyes."

When Elizabeth arrived in London she was met with cheering crowds, calling out and waving to those who praised her. She was determined to rule alone, always insisting that she would remain a virgin. Few believed her and she entertained marriage suitors until her fifties, using the hopes of foreign princes to secure dynastic alliances. She was also notable for her English favourites, with Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester hopeful that she would marry him.

At her accession, Elizabeth found the English religious position confused. She had conformed to Catholicism under her half-sister, but was widely believed to be a Protestant. As a result, she struggled to find a bishop to crown her, eventually recruiting the reluctant Bishop of Carlisle, before removing him from his see only six months later. Although Elizabeth freely admitted to being a Protestant (calling herself a 'heretic' to the Spanish ambassador, for example), she was considerably more moderate than her half-brother, Edward VI. She disliked married clergy and insisted, in the face of considerable pressure, on retaining a crucifix on her chapel's altar. In 1559 she created a religious settlement, intended to tread a middle way between Catholicism and Protestantism and laid the foundations of the modern Church of England.

Since she was the last member of the House of Tudor, the succession was a major issue of the reign. Under the rules of hereditary, Elizabeth's heir was her cousin, Mary, Queen of Scots. When, in 1568, Mary arrived in England having been deposed from her kingdom, Elizabeth imprisoned her. She refused to meet with her cousin and kept her under house arrest for the next two decades, with the increasingly desperate Mary participating in plots to assassinate the English queen. Elizabeth finally ordered her execution in 1587.

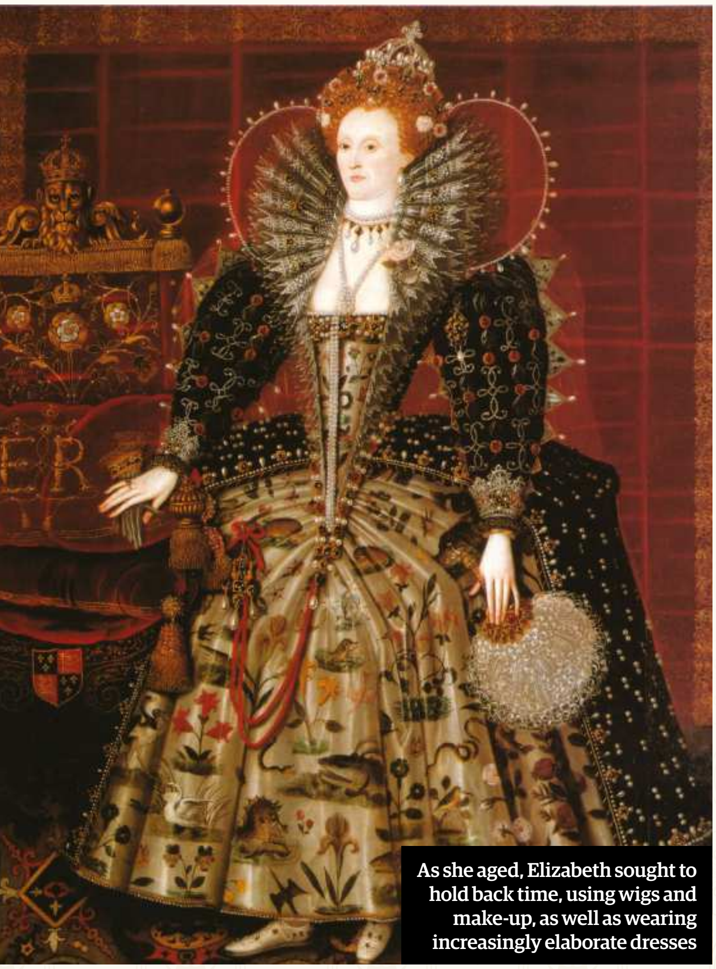
Mary's execution prompted the Spanish Armada, a great invasion fleet launched by Philip of Spain. Although the

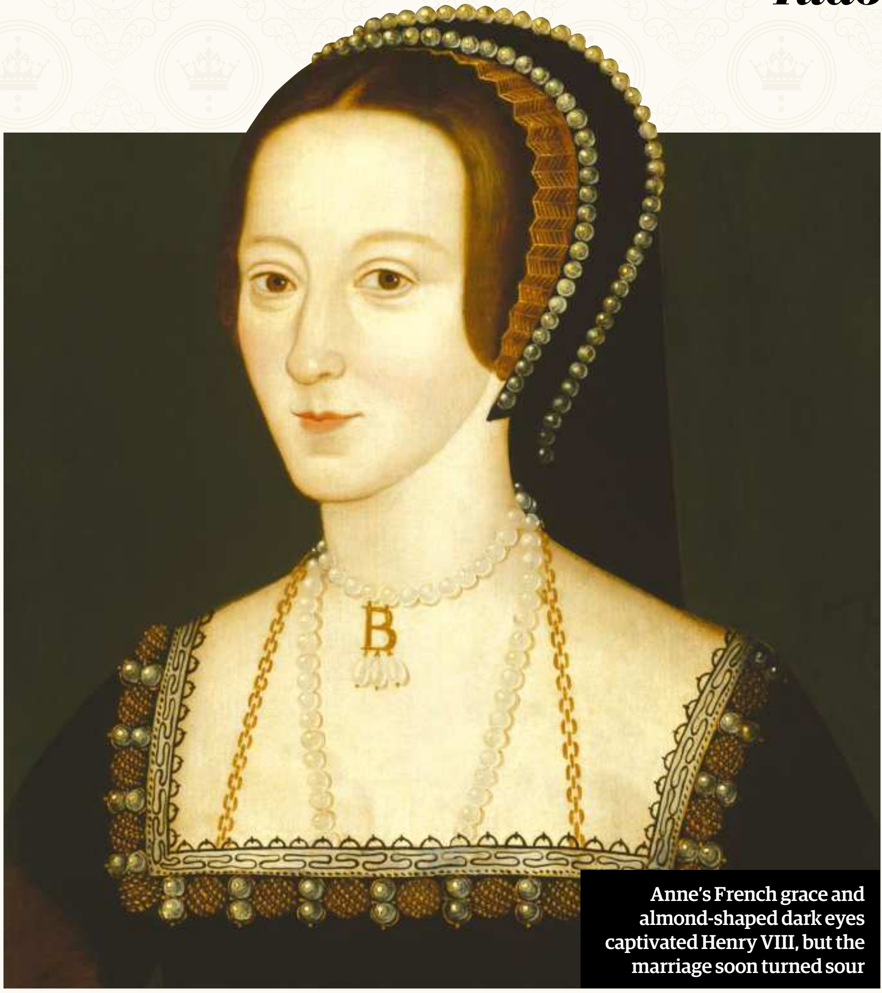
> “She outlived many of the figures of her early reign, such as her great statesman William Cecil”

fleet was rapidly annihilated by Elizabeth’s navy in 1588, Elizabeth also rallied her land troops at Tilbury, declaring that “I know I have the body but of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart and stomach of a king and of a king of England too.” It was her finest moment.

Elizabeth presided over a period of great exploration and literary culture. She outlived many of the figures of her early reign, such as her great statesman, William Cecil, and her spymaster, Sir Francis Walsingham. Robert Dudley’s death in 1588 hit her hardest, with the queen locking herself in her room on hearing the news.

The last decade of her reign was a time of economic decline and she faced a final blow with the rebellion of her favourite, the Earl of Essex in 1601. Her death in 1603, however, occurred in a country considerably more politically stable than it had been at her accession in 1558, or when her grandfather had won the throne in 1485.


As she aged, Elizabeth sought to hold back time, using wigs and make-up, as well as wearing increasingly elaborate dresses


Anne’s French grace and almond-shaped dark eyes captivated Henry VIII, but the marriage soon turned sour

Anne Boleyn

b.c.1501-d.1536

A controversial queen

The daughter of a diplomat and courtier, Anne Boleyn spent her teenaged years serving in the royal courts of the Netherlands and France. She was not considered beautiful, but she seemed quick witted, graceful and exotic in England. By 1526 Henry VIII was begging her to become his mistress, as her sister had previously been. Anne, however, having seen how her sister had been discarded by Henry, refused to become his lover. This rejection only increased the king’s interest. Finally, in 1527, he proposed marriage. That year he began his long campaign to annul his first marriage.

Finally, in January 1533, when Anne was already a few weeks pregnant, the couple married. The wedding was kept a secret for some months while Henry’s new Archbishop of Canterbury, the former Boleyn chaplain, Thomas Cranmer, pronounced on his annulment. Once this was done, Anne was crowned in June 1533 in a grand ceremony.

Although Henry had waited for Anne for more than six years, their honeymoon period proved brief. The birth of a daughter, rather than the desired son in September 1533 was a blow, while pregnancies in 1534 and 1536 ended in failure. The couple also quarrelled over Henry’s infidelities, which Anne was not prepared to ignore as her predecessor had done.

Anne was never popular either at court or with the people of England and many were working to bring about her fall. By the early months of 1536 Henry had resolved to rid himself of Anne and take a new wife, ordering her arrest on trumped-up charges of adultery and incest.

Anne defended herself well during her trial, but the result was never in question. The night before her execution, she joked that she would be known as ‘Queen Anne Lack-Head’. She was, in fact, no longer queen, since Henry had annulled their marriage. On 19 May 1536 Henry VIII’s second wife was beheaded by sword in the Tower of London.

Edward VI

b.1537-d.1553 1547-1553

The boy king

Edward VI, who was both the last Tudor king and the last child to sit upon the English throne, was born on 12 October 1537. He lost his mother, Jane Seymour, only 12 days after his birth, and he was initially raised alongside his half-sister, Princess Elizabeth, away from court. Always the star of the family, he was lauded as England's treasure by contemporaries, with his birth the fulfilment of Henry VIII's 28-year quest for a male heir.

Edward was given an excellent education and raised with the expectation that he would inherit the throne. This came rather sooner than he expected, in January 1547, when Edward was still only nine years old.

Due to Edward's youth, it was understood that he would require some form of regency. His father had named a regency council in his will, but this was quickly overruled by the new king's maternal uncle, Edward Seymour, who appointed himself Lord Protector and Duke of Somerset.

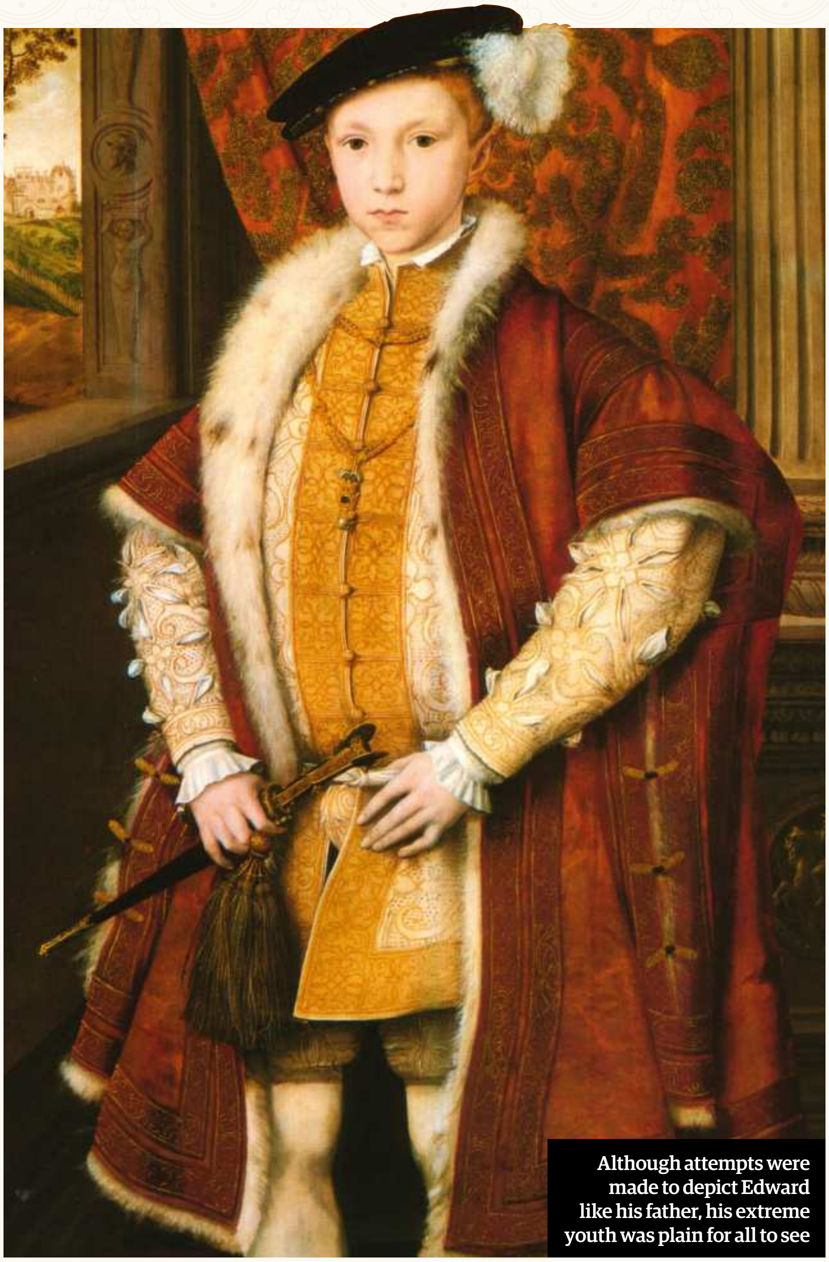
Somerset was a staunchly Protestant man and ensured that the new king was raised with the same opinions. At the same time, the Church of England swung rapidly towards radical Protestantism. With a new English prayer book, churches were white-washed and church ornaments removed. Purgatory and other tenets of the traditional church were outlawed as unscriptural and heretic.

In spite of their shared religious beliefs, Edward disliked his elder uncle, preferring the dashing Thomas Seymour, his mother's youngest brother. Thomas worked to sow discord between the king and his Lord Protector. When he eventually attempted to abduct the young king in January 1549, he was executed for treason.

Somerset never got over the accusation of fratricide and was removed as Lord Protector and, later, executed too. In his place, John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland rose to become Edward's chief minister. Edward was a precocious and highly intelligent boy. Northumberland was able to endear himself to the monarch by always showing his respect and taking him seriously - ostensibly treating him as an adult monarch.

Although still a child, by the early 1550s it was clear that Edward was becoming much more sure of himself. In March 1551 he publicly confronted his half-sister and heir, Princess Mary, to try to force her to abandon her Catholic faith. This move nearly led to war with Mary's cousin, the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V. Edward was also involved in negotiations for his marriage to Elizabeth of France, writing in his journal that he expected her to arrive "sufficiently jewelled and stuffed."

The marriage was never to happen. Although not a particularly sickly child, in April 1552 Edward fell ill with what he described as both measles and smallpox, which probably lowered his immunity. He seemed to recover but, by Christmas 1552 he was suffering from tuberculosis. By March 1553 he was noted by the Venetian ambassador to be clearly dying.

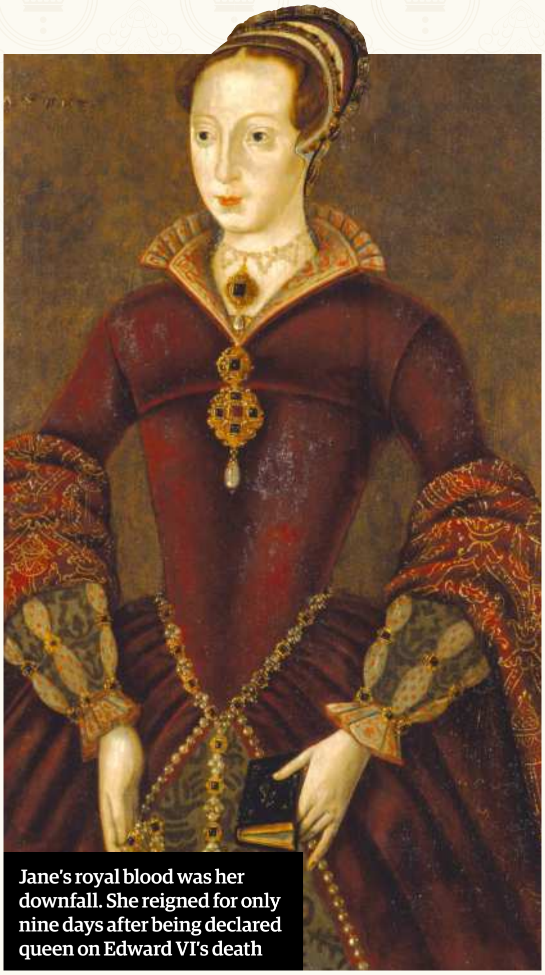


Although attempts were made to depict Edward like his father, his extreme youth was plain for all to see

> "It was clear that Edward was becoming more sure of himself"

Although still only 15 years old, the dying Edward was deeply troubled by the prospect of his Catholic half-sister succeeding him. He therefore drafted a document, in his own hand, which diverted the succession to the as-yet unborn male descendants of his aunt, Mary Tudor. As death approached more rapidly, he altered the document again to name his aunt's granddaughter, Lady Jane Grey, as his heir.

While Northumberland - who hurriedly married his son to Jane - benefitted from this, it is clear that much of the impetus came from the zealously Protestant Edward himself. Praying that he had done enough to guarantee the continuance of his Protestant Reformation, Edward died in the arms of two of his friends on 6 July 1553.



Jane's royal blood was her downfall. She reigned for only nine days after being declared queen on Edward VI's death

Lady Jane Grey

b.1537-d.1554 ♛ 10 July 1553 – 19 July 1553

Nine-day queen

Jane was the eldest of the three daughters born to Henry VIII's niece, Frances Brandon, by Henry Grey, Duke of Suffolk. Like her cousin, Edward VI, who was a similar age to her, she was given an outstanding education.

When, in early 1553, it was clear that the 15-year-old Edward VI was dying, both Edward and his chief minister, John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland, looked around for a Protestant candidate. To precipitate her succession, Jane was married to Northumberland's son, Guildford, on 25 May 1553.

Jane was declared queen by Northumberland following Edward VI's death in July 1553 and immediately taken to the Tower to await her coronation. While there, she was given the royal crown to try on for size, surprising everyone when she refused to allow another crown to be made for her husband. She would, she said, make him a duke, instead.

Jane's accession was greeted with surprise in England, with people immediately flocking to support Mary Tudor, who had declared herself queen. When Northumberland left London with an army to confront Mary, Jane had to order the Tower to be locked to stop members of her council from fleeing. On 19 July 1553 her own father entered the room in which she was dining to pull down the cloth of estate from above her head, signifying that she was no longer queen. She was shortly afterwards moved from the royal apartments to a prison.

Jane was still a teenager and the new queen recognised that she been Northumberland's puppet. Northumberland was executed, but Mary let it be known that she intended to spare Jane and Guildford. Unfortunately for the young couple, Jane's father became involved in a rebellion the following February. Amid rumours that he had attempted to re-proclaim Jane, it became dangerous for the queen to allow her to live. Jane and Guildford were both executed on 12 February 1554.

Mary I

b.1516-d.1558 ♛ 1553-1558

Bloody Mary

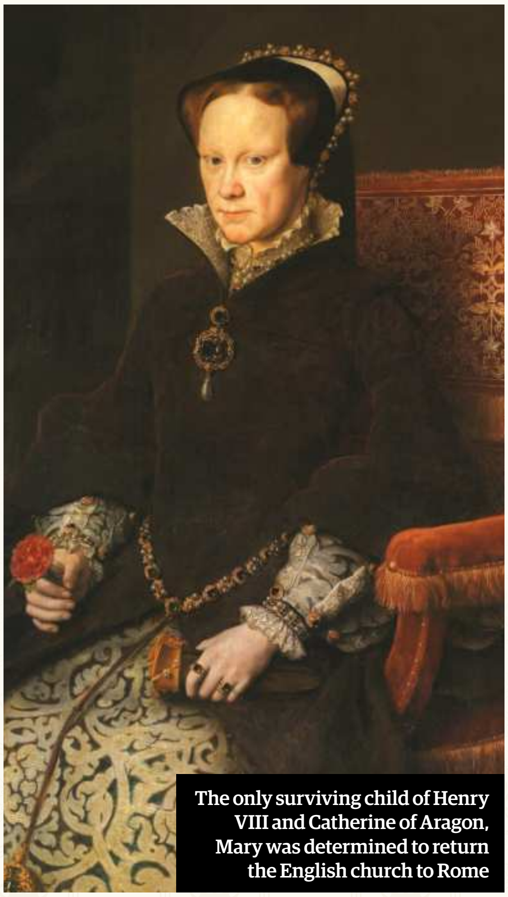
A pretty, intelligent child, Mary was beloved by both her parents in her youth. When Henry VIII first challenged his marriage in 1527, Mary sided with Catherine of Aragon, with mother and daughter kept apart. The princess only returned to court after being forced to acknowledge the invalidity of her parents' marriage and her own illegitimacy.

Mary was eventually returned to the succession and became heir to the throne on Henry's death. A staunch Catholic, she became increasingly estranged from her half-brother, Edward VI, and his government. Although attempts were made to frustrate her succession in July 1553, she swept to the throne on a wave of popular support. Mary was the first reigning queen of England to be crowned.

Mary saw her accession as miraculous and was determined to return the English church to Catholicism. At 37, she was also eager to marry quickly and provide a Catholic heir. Her choice fell on her cousin, Prince Philip of Spain, but this proved unpopular. Mary pushed ahead, defeating a rebellion, led by Sir Thomas Wyatt, which reached London in February 1554.

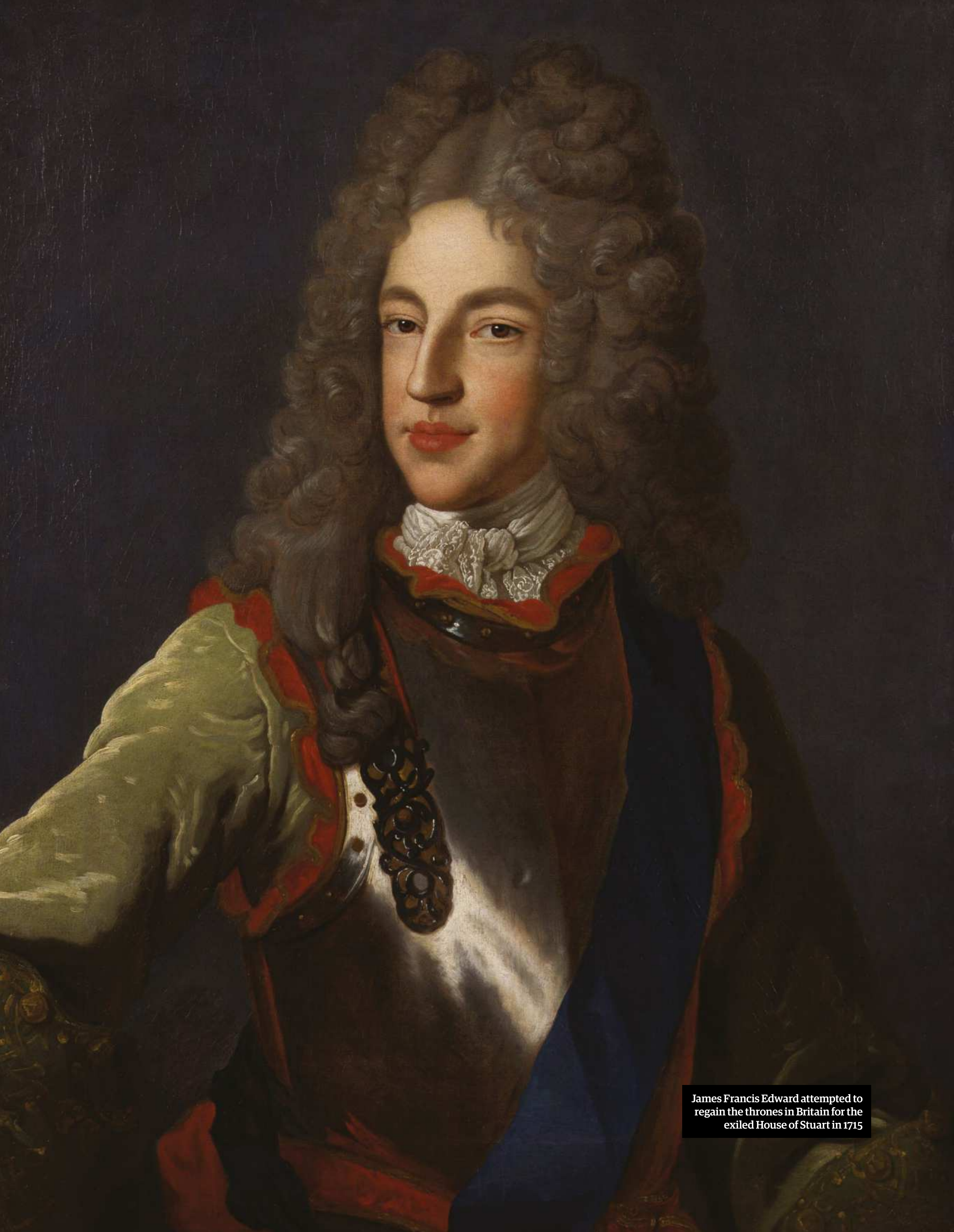
Mary immediately fell in love with Philip, but he found her rather older than expected. By late 1554, she was believed to be pregnant. With the queen showing all the signs of an impending birth, she retired to her chamber in April 1555. As the weeks passed, there was no sign of a royal baby and, finally, the queen was forced to admit that she had been mistaken. On learning the news Philip left England. He would return only once, for a brief visit.

The loss of Philip and her phantom pregnancy convinced Mary to increase her attempts to return England to Catholicism. She is remembered today for the Protestants burned during her reign, earning her the nickname 'Bloody Mary'. Mary's reign was, in any event, a brief one. She died on 17 November 1558 at the age of 42.



The only surviving child of Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon, Mary was determined to return the English church to Rome

© Getty Images



James Francis Edward attempted to regain the thrones in Britain for the exiled House of Stuart in 1715

STUART

1603-1714

Adding England and Ireland to the Kingdom of Scotland in a union of crowns, the later Stuarts never quite managed to bridge the gap between their three realms

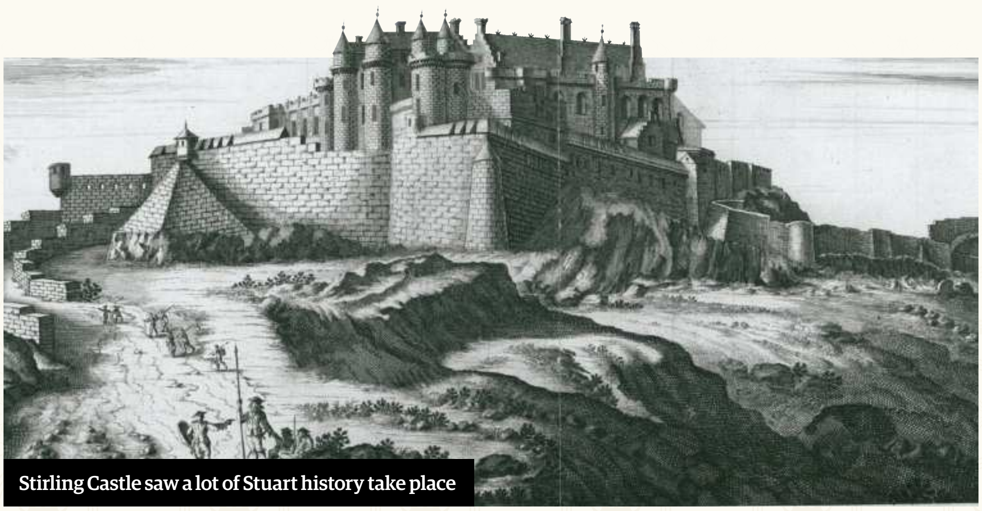
Words KATHARINE MARSH & HARRY CUNNINGHAM

When Elizabeth I of England died in 1603, the throne passed to the man who became James I - but he was already king of Scotland and his royal lineage went back hundreds of years to 11th-century Brittany. It was there that the Stuarts were stewards to the counts of Dol, before moving across the Channel to England then finding their way north to Scotland under David I.

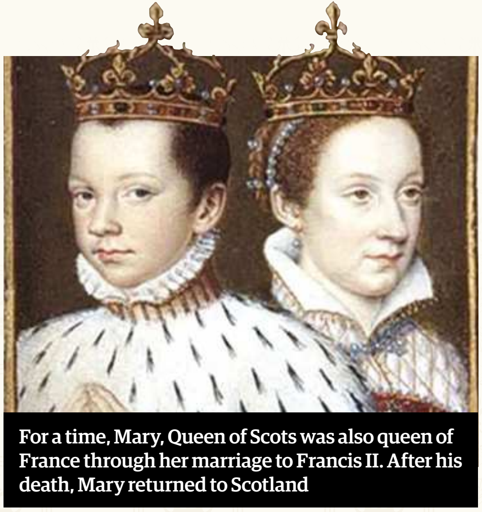
The first Stuart king, rising to the crown in 1371, was Robert II, whose maternal grandfather was the famed Robert the Bruce, and the dynasty continued with a direct male line for around 150 years until James V died, leaving his daughter, Mary, as his successor. However, the line was far from extinct - Mary, Queen of Scots had a son, the future James VI & I, and it was this monarch who would usher in the Stuart era in England after the death of the last Tudor queen.

With differing religious tolerances and an absolute belief in their divine right to the rule, the Stuarts had a hard time ruling over England. The last 100 years of the dynasty was plagued by rebellion, war and political infighting that saw the country become a republic for 11 years after the execution of a king - the only time this has happened in English history. However, the Stuart era was also a time when the arts flourished, scientific discoveries paved the way for the Age of Enlightenment, and the crowns of England and Scotland were finally brought together to create the United Kingdom in 1707.

The year of 1714 saw the end of a once-great dynasty as Queen Anne, the last monarch from the House of Stuart, passed away. With no surviving children, the crown moved to the German House of Hanover, the next Protestants in the line of succession. But the Stuarts still lived on, and some of them, like Bonnie Prince Charlie, fought to reclaim the throne - unfortunately, they never quite managed to get their grip on their prize.



Stirling Castle saw a lot of Stuart history take place

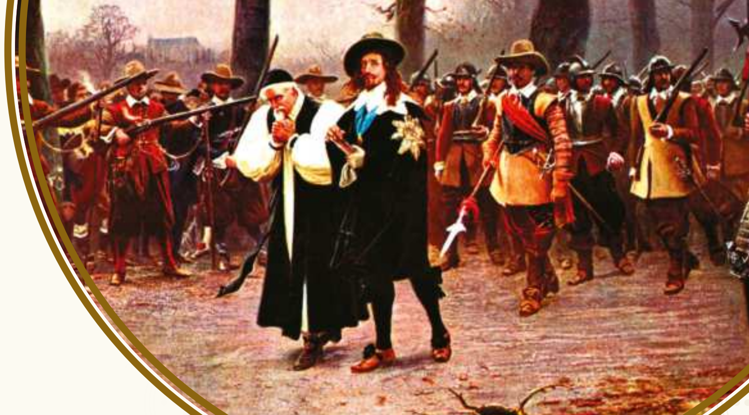


For a time, Mary, Queen of Scots was also queen of France through her marriage to Francis II. After his death, Mary returned to Scotland

Coat of arms © Sodacan license CC BY-SA 3.0

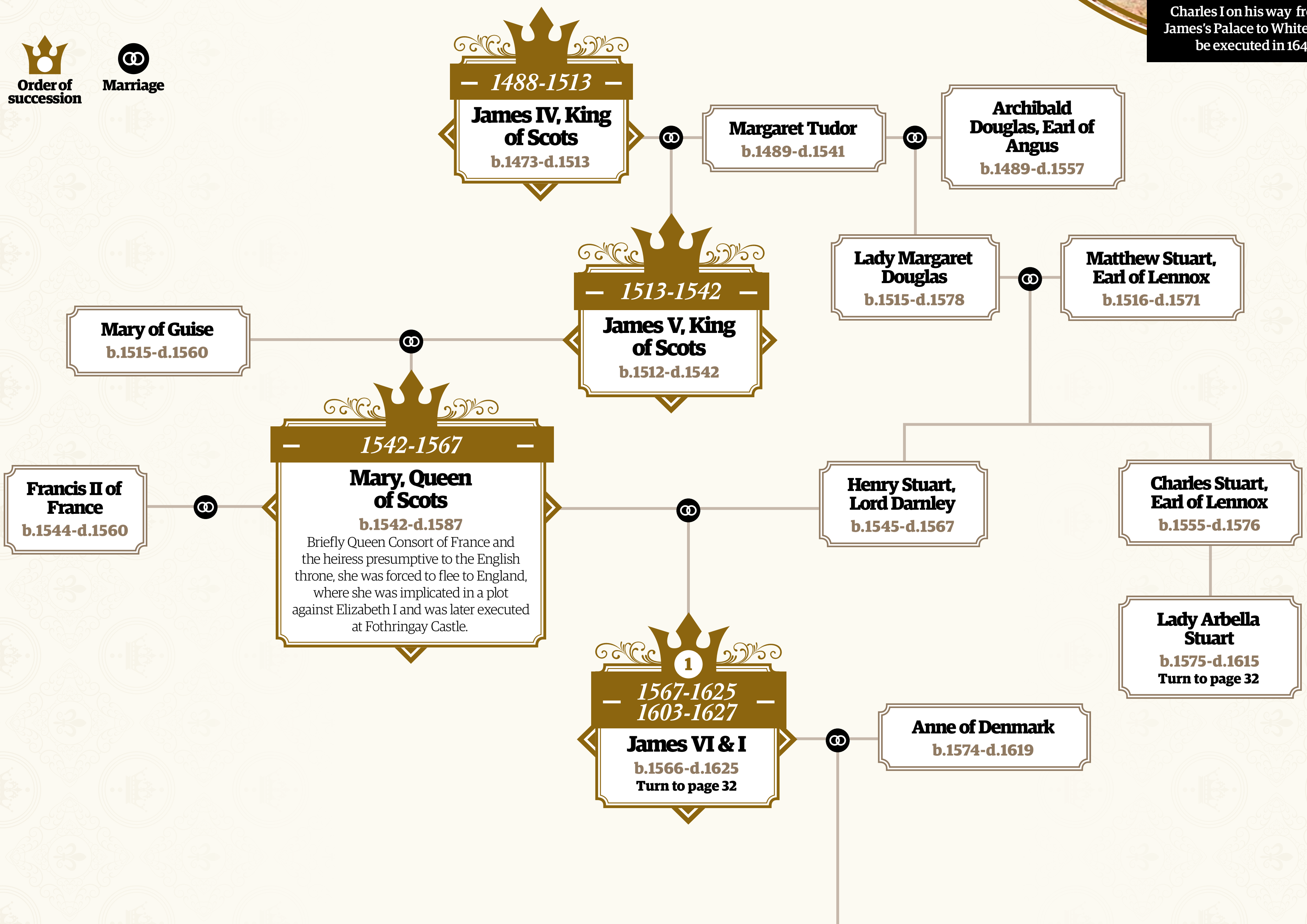
The PEDIGREE

Despite their hundred-year reign, the Stuart era was by far the most turbulent in English history



Charles I on his way from St James's Palace to Whitehall to be executed in 1649

© Getty images



Order of succession

Marriage

1488-1513
James IV, King of Scots
b.1473-d.1513

Margaret Tudor
b.1489-d.1541

Archibald Douglas, Earl of Angus
b.1489-d.1557

1513-1542
James V, King of Scots
b.1512-d.1542

Lady Margaret Douglas
b.1515-d.1578

Matthew Stuart, Earl of Lennox
b.1516-d.1571

Mary of Guise
b.1515-d.1560

1542-1567
Mary, Queen of Scots
b.1542-d.1587
Briefly Queen Consort of France and the heiress presumptive to the English throne, she was forced to flee to England, where she was implicated in a plot against Elizabeth I and was later executed at Fothringay Castle.

Francis II of France
b.1544-d.1560

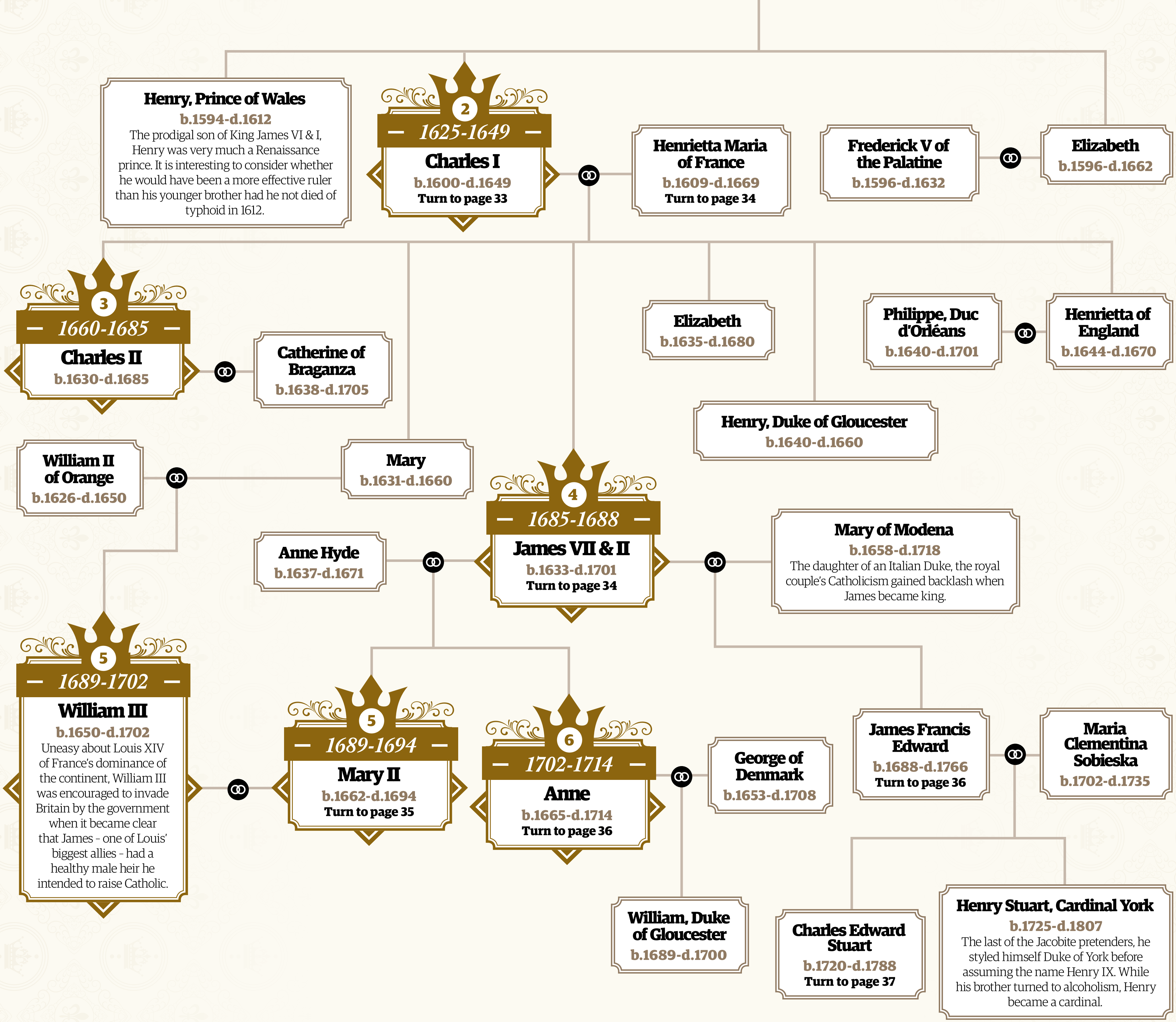
Henry Stuart, Lord Darnley
b.1545-d.1567

Charles Stuart, Earl of Lennox
b.1555-d.1576

Lady Arbella Stuart
b.1575-d.1615
Turn to page 32

1
1567-1625
1603-1627
James VI & I
b.1566-d.1625
Turn to page 32

Anne of Denmark
b.1574-d.1619



Henry, Prince of Wales
b.1594-d.1612
The prodigal son of King James VI & I, Henry was very much a Renaissance prince. It is interesting to consider whether he would have been a more effective ruler than his younger brother had he not died of typhoid in 1612.

2
1625-1649
Charles I
b.1600-d.1649
Turn to page 33

Henrietta Maria of France
b.1609-d.1669
Turn to page 34

Frederick V of the Palatine
b.1596-d.1632

Elizabeth
b.1596-d.1662

3
1660-1685
Charles II
b.1630-d.1685

Catherine of Braganza
b.1638-d.1705

Elizabeth
b.1635-d.1680

Philippe, Duc d'Orléans
b.1640-d.1701

Henrietta of England
b.1644-d.1670

Henry, Duke of Gloucester
b.1640-d.1660

William II of Orange
b.1626-d.1650

Mary
b.1631-d.1660

Anne Hyde
b.1637-d.1671

4
1685-1688
James VII & II
b.1633-d.1701
Turn to page 34

Mary of Modena
b.1658-d.1718
The daughter of an Italian Duke, the royal couple's Catholicism gained backlash when James became king.

5
1689-1702
William III
b.1650-d.1702
Uneasy about Louis XIV of France's dominance of the continent, William III was encouraged to invade Britain by the government when it became clear that James - one of Louis' biggest allies - had a healthy male heir he intended to raise Catholic.

5
1689-1694
Mary II
b.1662-d.1694
Turn to page 35

6
1702-1714
Anne
b.1665-d.1714
Turn to page 36

George of Denmark
b.1653-d.1708

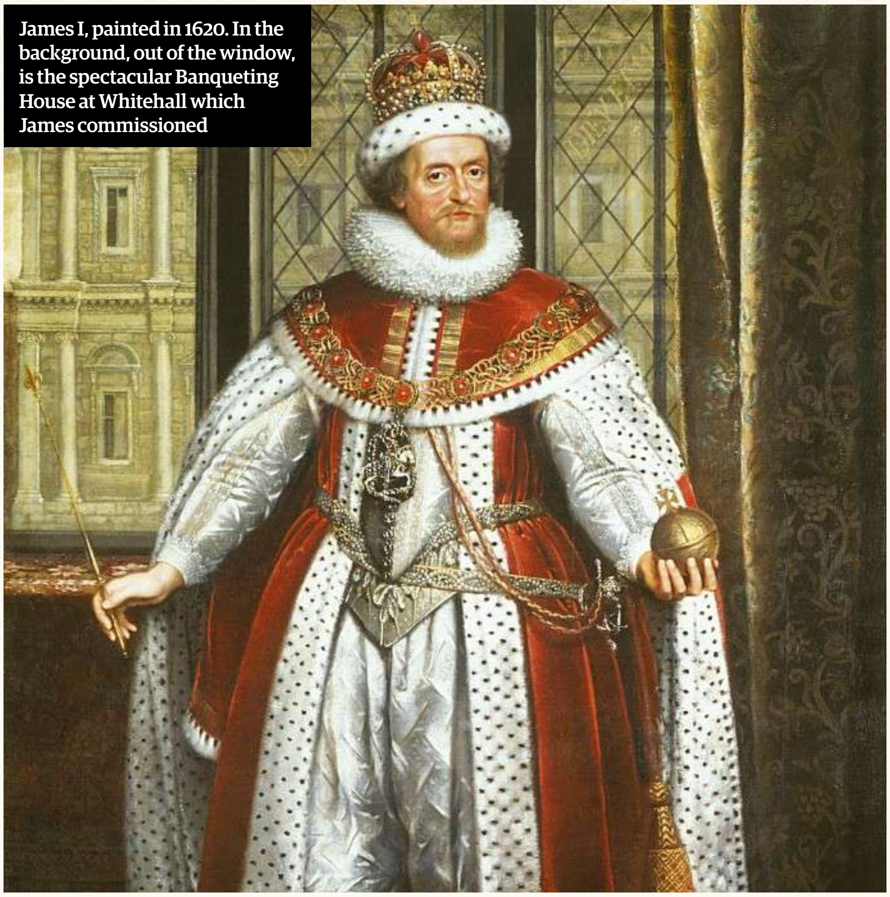
James Francis Edward
b.1688-d.1766
Turn to page 36

Maria Clementina Sobieska
b.1702-d.1735

William, Duke of Gloucester
b.1689-d.1700

Charles Edward Stuart
b.1720-d.1788
Turn to page 37

Henry Stuart, Cardinal York
b.1725-d.1807
The last of the Jacobite pretenders, he styled himself Duke of York before assuming the name Henry IX. While his brother turned to alcoholism, Henry became a cardinal.


James I, painted in 1620. In the background, out of the window, is the spectacular Banqueting House at Whitehall which James commissioned

King James VI & I

b.1566-d.1625 ♛ Scotland: 1567-1625, England: 1603-1625

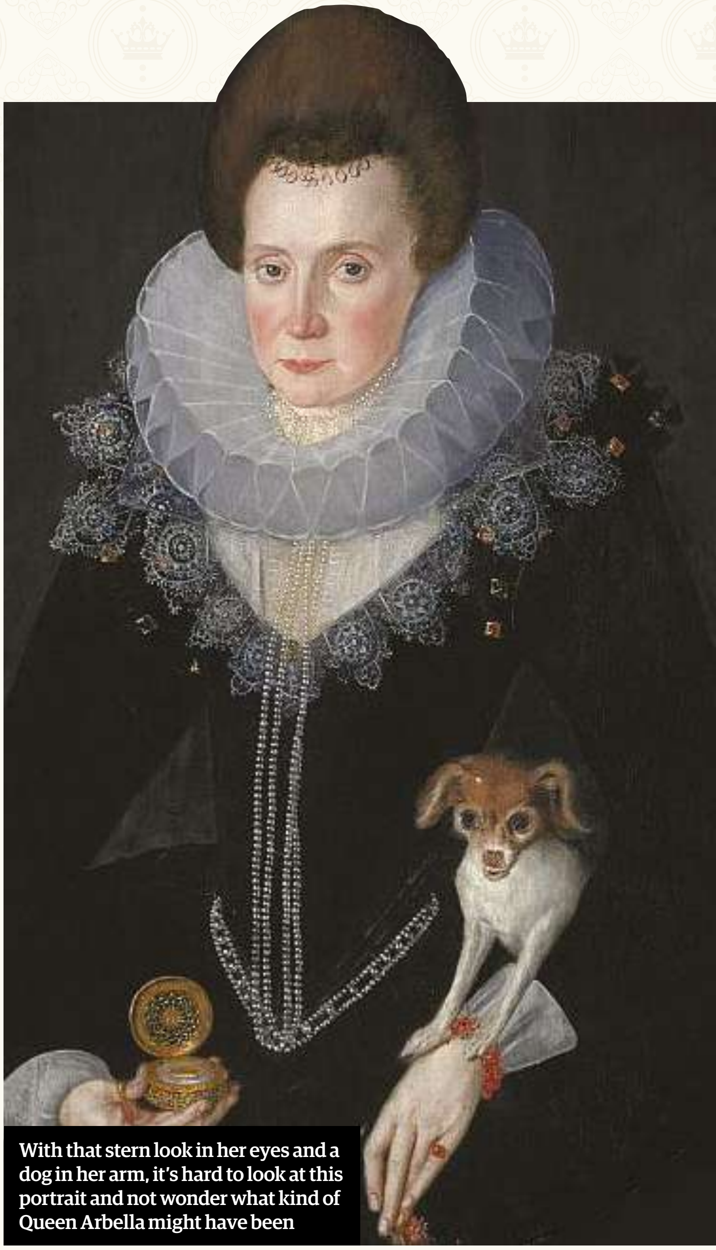
The playwright's king

Crowned King of Scots when he was little over a year old, James VI was invited to England to become James I in 1603 following the death of Elizabeth I. When he arrived south of the border, an air of uneasiness and foreboding swept over the country. Scotland had been England's oldest and cantankerous enemy and now the two kingdoms would be joined at the hip. While Elizabeth has come to be seen as a compromising figure who relied on her courtiers and favourites, James attempted to impose his own autocratic rule on England. He had his own 1598 tract on Kingship, The True Lawe of Free Monarchies, which spelt out his belief in the divine right of kings, reprinted in his new kingdom, much to his subject's dismay.

In many ways, we can see the beginnings of the Civil War and political strife that would come to dominate the Stuarts' time on the throne during James' reign. Opposition to his rule started almost immediately, with fears that there might be open rebellion on the streets of London when he arrived from Edinburgh in 1603. In 1605 Guy Fawkes attempted to assassinate him during the state opening of parliament and he subsequently clamped down on civil liberties. Catholicism could be tolerated no more, even in secret. Everybody was a suspect; absolutely nobody was safe.

The dark cloud James brought over England heavily influenced works like Shakespeare's Macbeth and Hamlet and the violent and often gory revenge tragedies that dominated the period – Thomas Middleton's The Revenger's Tragedy and John Webster's The Duchess of Malfi, to name two.

James also attempted and failed to unite his two kingdoms into one Great Britain due to a lack of parliamentary support but, despite his shortcomings, as Jenny Wormald writes, "after his death men looked back on James as the king of scholarship and wit," perhaps no doubt because the reign of his son was so disastrous.


With that stern look in her eyes and a dog in her arm, it's hard to look at this portrait and not wonder what kind of Queen Arbella might have been

Lady Arbella Stuart

b.1575-d.1615

The lady in waiting

Anyone interested in alternative history theories or indeed contemporary Scottish politics may well look to Lady Arbella Seymour (neé Stuart) and lament about what may have been. For this seemingly minor royal, a great-granddaughter of Queen Margaret Tudor, was once touted as a more suitable successor

> "Elizabeth I's paranoia brought talk of Arbella marrying to an end"

to Queen Elizabeth I than her cousin King James VI of Scotland. Had she reigned and had children of her own, England and Scotland may have remained entirely separate countries with separate monarchs.

Born in 1575, at the height of Queen Elizabeth's golden age, by the age of six both her father, Charles Stuart, Earl of Lennox and her mother Elizabeth, Countess of Lennox (née Cavendish) had died, so she was brought up in Derbyshire by her grandmother Elizabeth Talbot, Countess of Shrewsbury, known as Bess of Hardwick. Very soon she was lined up with some of the most influential suitors in the Elizabethan world. First there was Robert Dudley, the son of the Earl of Leicester who was a favourite and perhaps even clandestine lover of Elizabeth I. Then there was Rainutio Farense, son of the duke of Parma. James VI himself was even touted at one point. In the end, however, Elizabeth I's paranoia about formally naming a successor brought any talk of Arbella marrying to an end; the thought of Arbella producing heirs during her life time and therefore creating a rival dynasty was politically dangerous and Elizabeth discouraged any royal match-making.

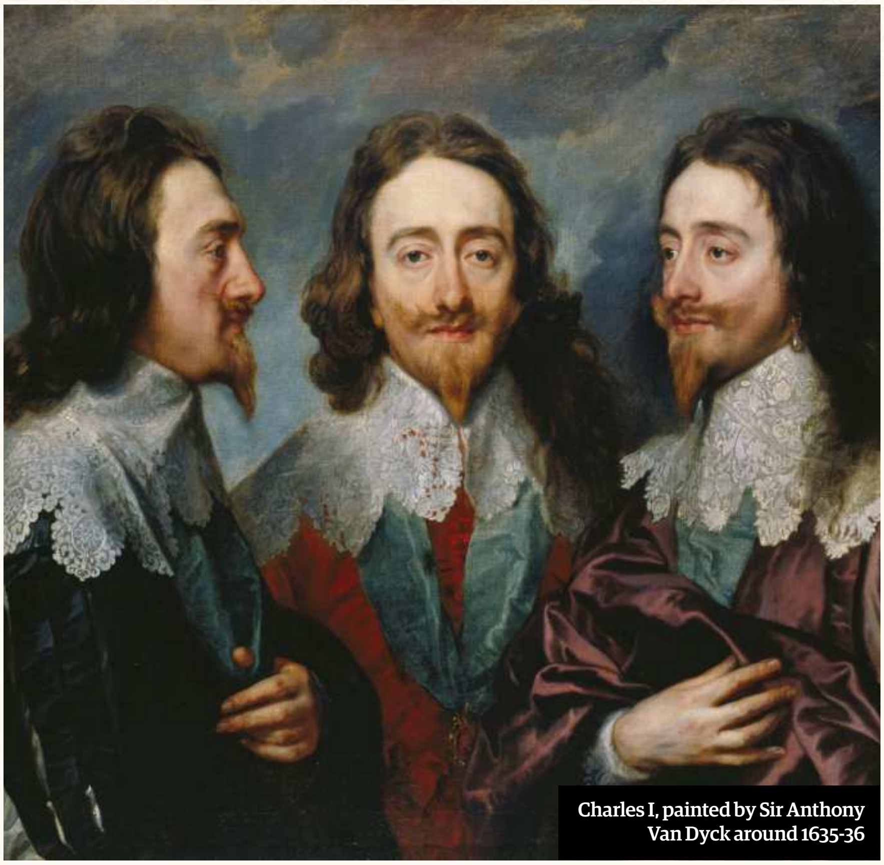
In 1588 she became a lady-in-waiting to Elizabeth I, but she was caught talking in what the queen only assumed to be an inappropriate manner with the Earl of Essex and she was dismissed.

By 1602, aged 27, Arbella, clearly desperate to marry, made a fatal error of judgement in declaring her intention to marry into the Seymour family. James VI or the duke of Parma would easily have been a safer choice, but the Seymours were known political schemers, going back to the reign of Edward VI. Any suggestion that this was part of a grand plot, however, was killed off when the family announced that this had simply been a cry for help and that Elizabeth should listen to her concerns.

Soon after James VI became King of England in 1603, a plot was hatched by Henry Brooke. James would be murdered and Arbella placed on the throne and married off to Thomas Grey. But she merely laughed at the suggestion and informed King James, who rewarded her with an increased pension.

With James taking the same view of Elizabeth about her marriage, Lady Arbella began to become extremely frustrated. Ignoring the King's wishes, in 1610, aged 35, she married William Seymour in secret. When the marriage was discovered just a few days later, William successfully escaped to Ostend in Flanders, but Arbella was not so lucky. Caught mid-voyage across the channel, partly because she wanted to wait for William who had missed an agreed rendezvous point, she was captured and imprisoned in the Tower of London.

Lonely and ignored, Arbella fell ill and began to starve herself. With no husband, child or status and with no hope of escaping, she had, to all intents and purposes, given up on her miserable life. For although there is little evidence she ever craved the crown for herself, it is clear that by accident of birth she spent her life as a never-ending pawn in the royal succession.



Charles I, painted by Sir Anthony Van Dyck around 1635-36

King Charles I

b.1600-d.1649 ♛ 1625-1649

The king who lost his head

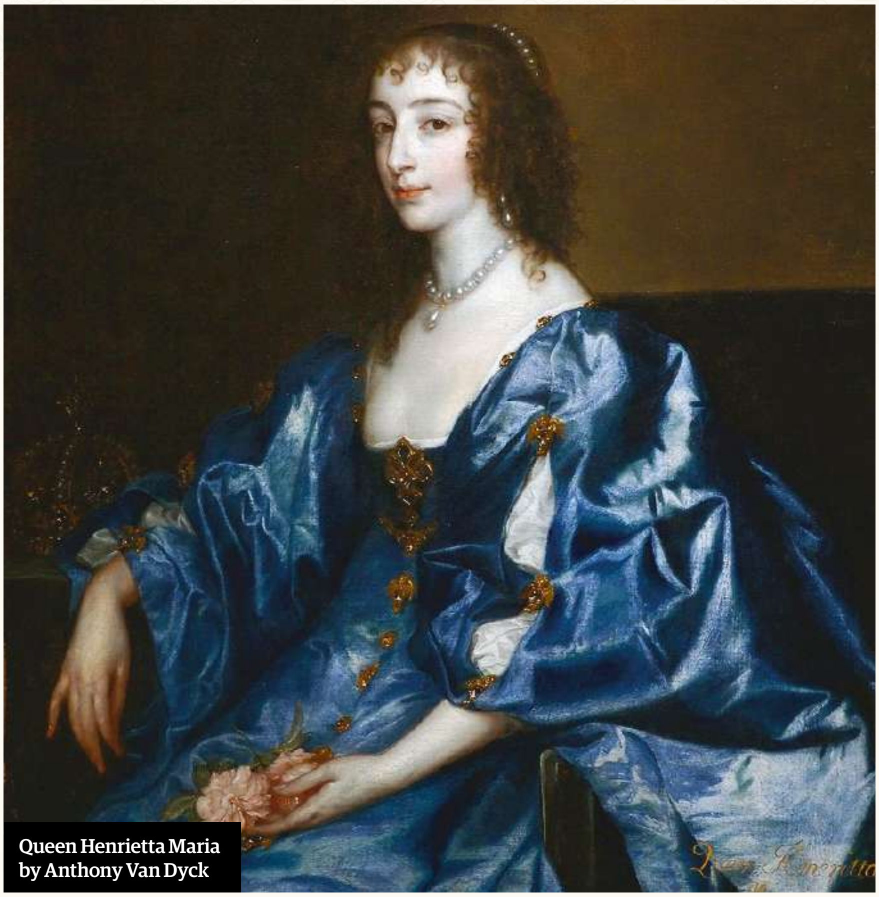
For the first 12 years of his life, Charles was considered the spare. Studious, quiet, and deeply pious, he was touted as a future Archbishop of Canterbury when his brother, Prince Henry, took the throne. But Henry's sudden death cast Charles into the limelight and, aged 25, he was King Charles' belief in the divine right of kings, combined with his penchant for the extravagant, led to tensions with parliament. He spent vast sums on adoring commemorations to James I, including intricate ceiling panels by Rubens in the Banqueting House and he fought disastrous campaigns against Spain and France, which he lost.

Parliament, concerned about the influence of Charles' most trusted advisor and rumoured lover of James I, George Villiers, duke of Buckingham, refused to grant him the supplies he needed. They were also unimpressed by his marriage to Henrietta Maria, a Catholic, whom they worried might persuade Charles to reverse the Elizabethan religious settlement that was in place.

To secure the funds he needed, Charles raised taxes without parliamentary authority and forced his wealthier subjects to lend him money, imprisoning those who refused. He ruled on his own for 11 years but was forced to reconvene parliament in 1640. Things came to a head in 1642 when he tried to arrest five MPs who had been vocal in their criticism of him. The door to the Commons was slammed shut in his face as he arrived in parliament, the MPs fled and a state of Civil War began.

As it became clear that Charles had lost the Civil War, parliament placed him under house arrest and attempted to negotiate, only for him to escape and reignite the conflict.

His refusal to offer a defence at his trial for treason in 1649, claiming that as monarch he was above the law and answered only to God, left the court with little option but to find him guilty. He was executed on 30 January 1649 and a republic was declared.



Queen Henrietta Maria by Anthony Van Dyck

Queen Henrietta Maria

b.1609-d.1669

The Catholic consort

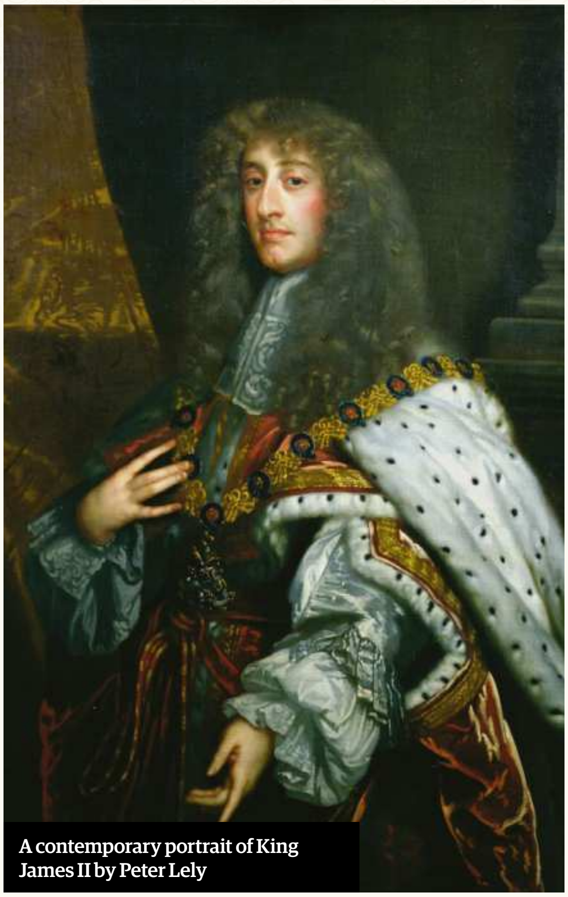
Henrietta Maria was quite the catch. Her father was Henri IV, the King of France and her mother Marie de' Medici was a member of one of the most powerful and politically important families in Europe.

But while her marriage to Charles, Prince of Wales, a future King, might have seemed like the perfect political pairing, it was fraught with difficulties due to England being a Protestant nation and France being Catholic. During the negotiation of the marriage treaty, special dispensation was made to ensure that the future queen and any children she had would be free to practise their religion as they saw fit and would not be subject to the penal laws others faced.

Indeed, a secret treaty was signed by Charles, indicating that he would be prepared to relax some of the anti-Catholic laws, though parliament vehemently opposed this.

By the time the marriage was due to go ahead, James I had died and Henrietta Maria, aged just 15, was now queen consort of three kingdoms. After the assassination of the duke of Buckingham, she increasingly held great sway over the King and it was she who persuaded Charles to proceed with the arrest of the five members of parliament in 1642 that led to the outbreak of the Civil War. By now she was not just interested in special dispensation for her own religious belief but was campaigning behind the scenes for a Catholic revival in England, an act of borderline treason in the eyes of many of the members of the Commons.

The execution of her husband in 1649 had a profound effect on Henrietta Maria and it is said that she never really recovered. She reclused into a convent in Paris and became deeply religious. She lived long enough to see the monarchy restored in 1660 and returned to England, where her revenues and status were restored.



A contemporary portrait of King James II by Peter Lely

King James VII & II

b.1633-d.1701 ♛ 1685-1688

The spare who lost it all

As the younger brother of Charles II and second son of Charles I, James II was never expected to take the throne, a prospect which became even more unlikely when his father was executed and the monarchy was abolished.

At the time of his birth, Charles I was enjoying a relatively stable period, having dissolved parliament and opted to rule on his own. James, gifted the title of the Duke of York, spent most of his childhood in London at Richmond Palace, but as his father's relationship with parliament and the country at large disintegrated, he soon became a pawn in the titanic struggle for power between the two institutions. By 1642, Charles no longer felt comfortable remaining in England and decamped to Scotland. He wanted nine-year-old James to join him but parliament had forbidden such a move, wanting to control him for their own purposes. At the height of the Civil War in 1644 and aged only 11, James was sent to the royalist stronghold of Oxford to study. The city fell in 1646 and James was captured and sent back to London, managing to escape into exile in 1648 when the Civil War was all but lost.

> "In the years leading up to his accession, hysteria gripped the country"

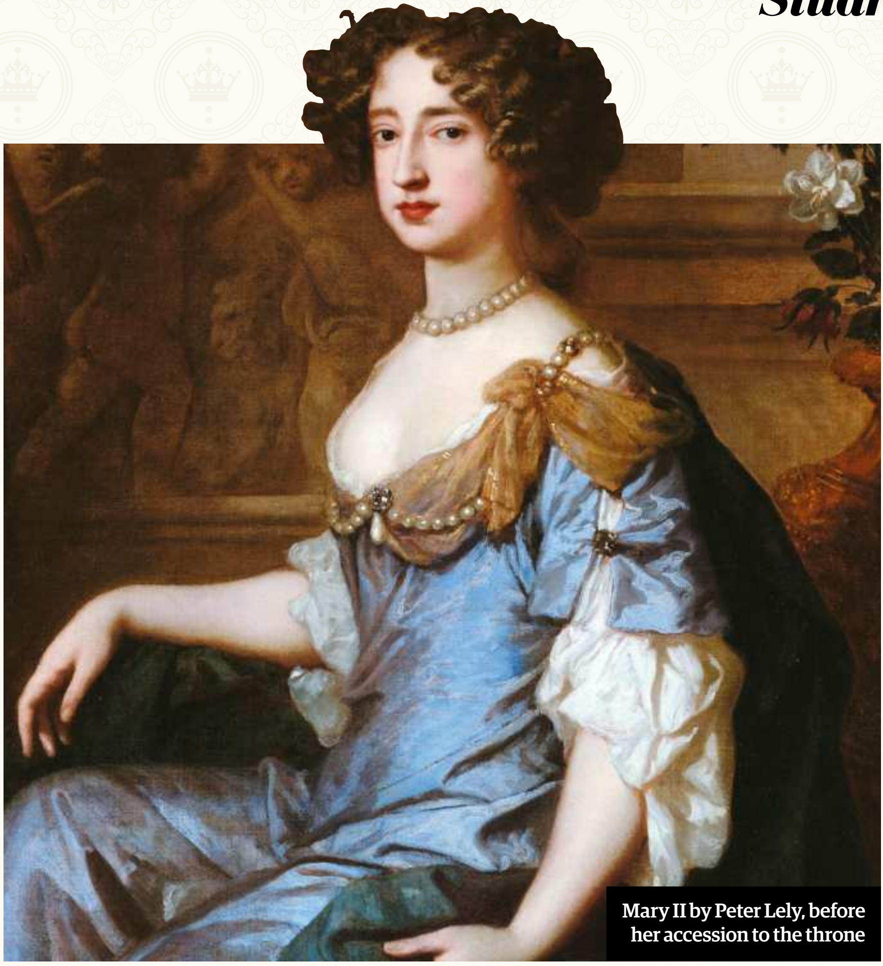
In The Hague he joined his sister Mary and her husband, the Prince of Orange, before spending a month at the Benedictine monastery St Armand and later meeting with his mother in Paris. It was widely believed that it was while he was abroad that James was converted to Catholicism. Without the influence of his father or the trappings of the English court, James would have been raised by his mother, Queen Henrietta Maria, a devout Catholic, without the fear of it becoming a political issue.

By the time the monarchy was restored in 1660, James had married his first wife Anne Hyde and had developed a taste for the hedonistic and extravagant lifestyle which characterised the restoration age. He had numerous lovers and vastly overspent.

Although to the public at large he appeared a Protestant, by the 1670s James had become a fully fledged Catholic. In 1671, Anne died and before her death she had admitted to her own Catholicism. By 1672, James had stopped taking communion and in 1673 his Catholicism became public knowledge. Following the introduction of the Test Act, which had been introduced to quell the growing sense of a Catholic establishment takeover, James as Lord High Admiral would have had to have sworn allegiance to the Anglican church. Instead, he chose the resign. The public put two and two together.

In the years leading up to his accession, hysteria gripped the country. Accusations of a conspiracy in which Charles II would be assassinated and replaced by James - a Catholic takeover, known as the Popish Plot - led the country into a meltdown. People gathered to burn effigies of the Pope, men thought to be involved were rounded up and successful attempts were made in parliament to have James removed from the line of succession, which were only thrashed by Charles' intervention. But the fear of a Catholic fifth column had all been an elaborate hoax concocted by a serial fantasist and compulsive liar, Titus Oates.

When James finally succeeded to the throne in 1685, his reign was short lived. Although he survived an attempted coup by Charles II's illegitimate son, the Duke of Monmouth, his autocratic tendencies and his desire to change the national religion back to Catholicism proved too much. His daughter and her Protestant husband, William III of Orange, were invited to the throne as joint sovereigns and James, his power base destroyed and public opinion firmly against him, had little choice but to flee the country. Parliament declared that this constituted an act of abdication and he lived the rest of his life in exile.



Mary II by Peter Lely, before her accession to the throne

Queen Mary II

b.1662-d.1694 ♛ 1689-1694

The sensible successor

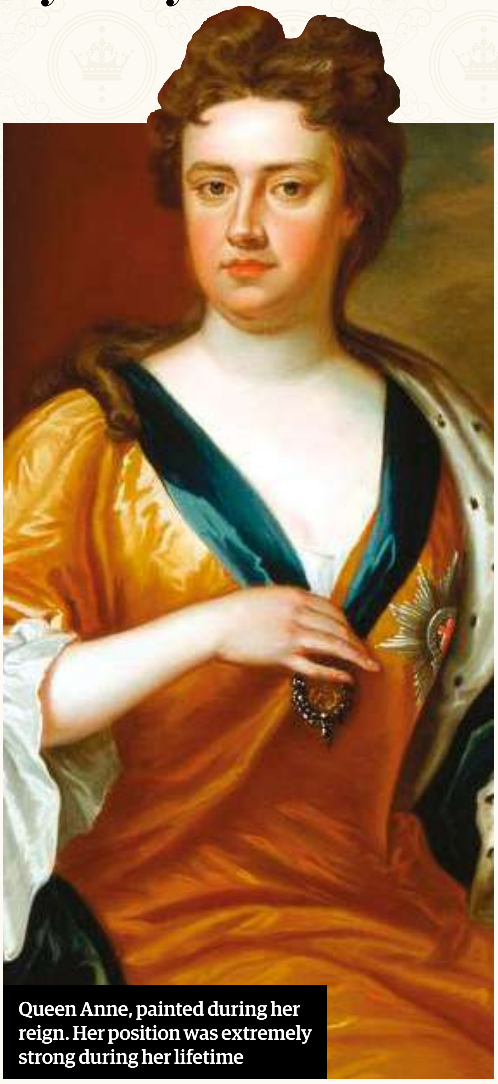
James II's eldest child through his first wife, Anne Hyde, was the obvious next choice to succeed him when he took flight in 1688.

Given that both Anne and James had exhibited public signs of Catholicism, the education of Mary had been a point of contention. She had been entrusted to the Protestant bishops of London and Winchester and the archdeacon of Exeter so that there could now be little doubting her allegiance.

When her mother and brother died, Mary's marriage also became a political issue as she was now second in line to the throne after her father. Prince William of Orange was the preferred choice of the Protestant faction and of Charles II but James was not initially convinced, though he was later persuaded. Mary was opposed to the marriage, being only 15 while he was 26. Her sister allegedly chastised her, calling her new partner Caliban, the feral antagonist of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*.

Mary was suspicious of the birth of James II's son by Mary of Modena who could displace her in the line of succession. This would be used as a pretext for William's invasion and after James' flight had been declared an act of abdication, it was decided that they would be joint sovereigns - the only time this has happened in British history - but William would have the authority to overrule her, something that pleased Mary; she believed that women should have a limited or no role at all in the affairs of state.

When they officially took the throne, William and Mary agreed to uphold the principles of the Bill of Rights - the most important constitutional document since the Magna Carta - which significantly curtailed their royal prerogative. One of Mary's greatest achievements was persuading the Tories, who had supported James II in the exclusion crisis and Charles I in the Civil War, that they should accept the Act, something that the somewhat bullish William III may have found difficult to achieve on his own.



Queen Anne, painted during her reign. Her position was extremely strong during her lifetime

Queen Anne

b.1665-d.1714 ♛ 1702-1714

The unifier

Queen Anne, James II's second daughter, was the last of the Stuart monarchs. The greatest achievement of her reign was undoubtedly the unification of England and Scotland into the single kingdom of Great Britain in 1707, an ambition of James VI & I, who 100 years earlier had failed to convince either his subjects or his parliaments of the merit of a union.

Like her sister, Mary II, Anne was raised a Protestant, much to the displeasure of her father. When he ascended the throne, they fell out, with Anne denouncing James' Catholic tendencies and making almost treasonous statements. It was most probable that Anne was behind the rumour that James' son was an imposter, brought in on a bedpan, since she and her sister Mary, whom she was very close with, had the most to lose by the birth of a male heir.

It was no surprise, then, that Anne supported William of Orange's invasion. On the day her father absconded, she remained in London and proudly wore orange colours, able to secure a sizeable pension for herself once William and Mary had been installed.

At one point a marriage had been suggested between Anne and Prince Georg Ludwig of Brunswick-Lüneburg, the future George I, and the two seemed to get a long, but these plans fell through and she instead married another Prince George, the brother of the King of Denmark, in 1683.

When she succeeded to the throne in 1702, Anne was immensely popular. She described herself as an English Queen and was crowned on St George's day, which was important because the Stuarts were Scottish and had always been viewed with scepticism by their English subjects. Despite supporting William and Mary, Anne also heavily supported the Tories and this helped to cement her position as a moderate, given the natural Tory allegiance for the Jacobite cause. She died with no heirs on 1 August 1714 and the throne passed as planned to her former suitor, the Protestant Hanoverian, who now became George I.

James Francis Edward Stuart

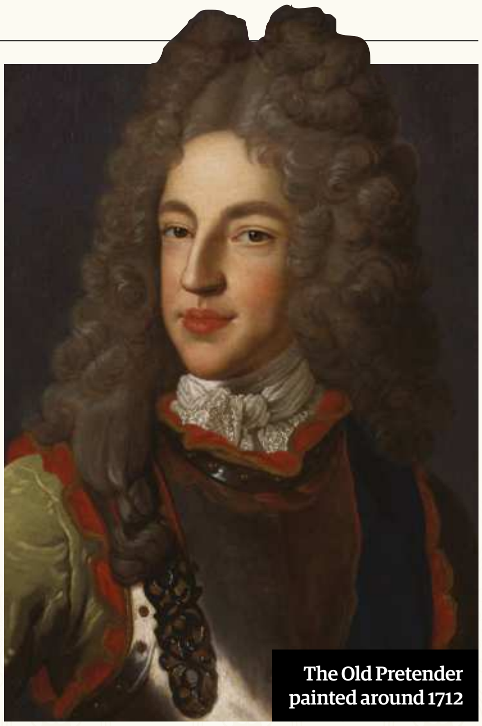
b.1688-d.1766

The Old Pretender

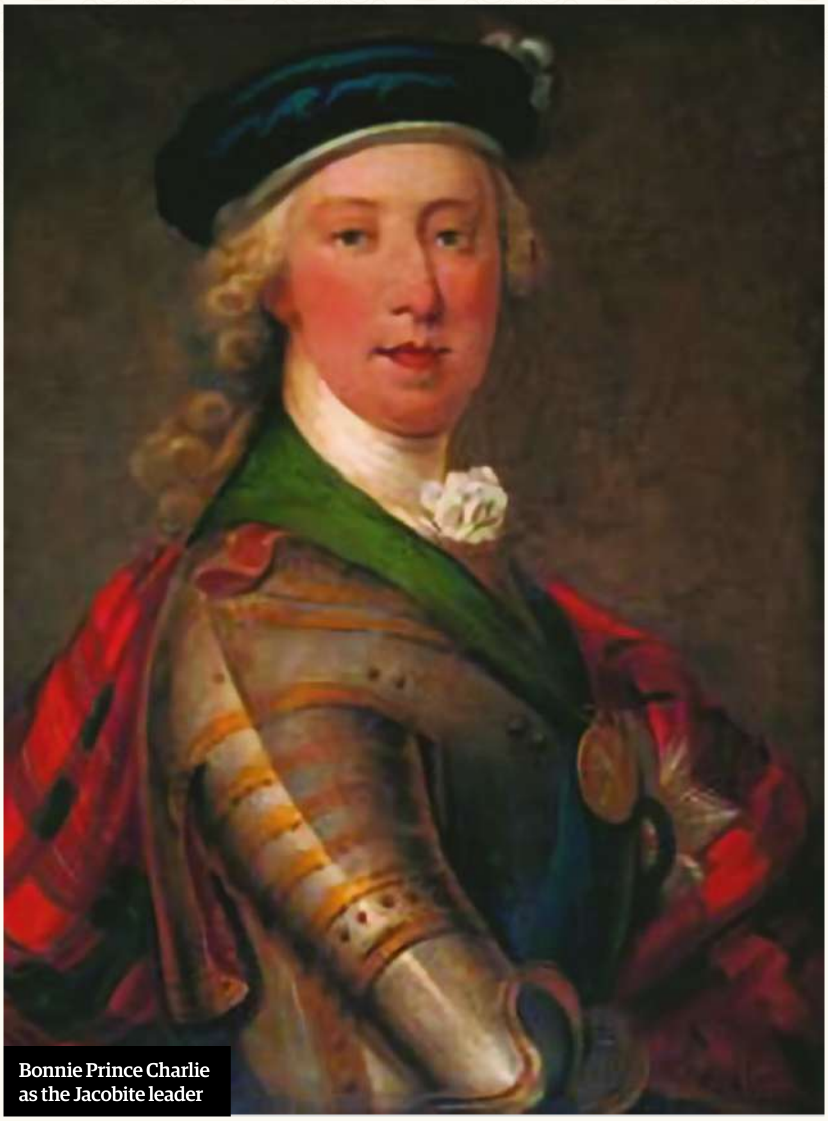
James Francis was born into hysteria. With his mother assumed unable to produce healthy children, it was widely assumed that James' Protestant half-sister, Mary, would take the throne. But the birth of a male heir reignited fears about the succession. Rumours circulated that the Queen had not been pregnant at all and the baby in question was an imposter, smuggled into her chamber in a bedpan, part of a secret plot to ensure a Catholic succession and bar Princess Mary from her rightful inheritance.

With little political or military support, James II fled for France, effectively abdicating. Baby James joined his family at Château de Saint-Germain-en-Laye near Paris. Raised as a staunch Catholic, he was barred from inheriting the throne by the 1689 Bill of Rights. Described by Edward Gregg as having many assets: "tenacity of purpose, considerable physical courage, a quick (but not profound) intelligence, and a quiet personal charm," it was clear James Francis was a cautious, academic man, but he was neither an adept politician with the charisma and diplomacy skills to talk his way back to power, nor a skilful military commander with the power base to pull off a coup that stood any chance of succeeding.

Restoration was off the table while the popular Queen Anne was on the throne, but when she lay dying, there is strong evidence that senior Tories including Viscount Bollingbroke, who had always been uneasy with many of the stipulations of the Bill of Rights, approached James Francis with a view to restoring him as king – but only if he recanted his Catholicism. Compromise, however, was not a word that featured in the Stuart vocabulary; he refused to recant. Like his father and grandfather, James Francis' refusal to move even an inch was his greatest flaw. The new King – George I – favoured the Whigs, bringing to an end even remote political sympathy for his cause. He lived to see his son's failed uprising in 1745 but spent his last years confined to his bed.



The Old Pretender painted around 1712



Bonnie Prince Charlie as the Jacobite leader

© Getty Images

Charles Edward Stuart

b.1720-d.1788

The Bonnie prince

Charles Edward Louis John Casimir Silvester Severino Maria Stuart was born at the Palazzo Muti in Rome, the first pretender not to have been born into royalty. Both his name and his place of birth reveal that, like his father before him, his chances of gaining back the throne were remote. Availed of the clandestine Catholicism that Charles II and James II had been forced to endure, the Stuart pretenders were now out and proud.

Charles Edward's upbringing was particularly traumatic and, according to Murray Pittock, it permanently scarred him. Both the Pope and King Philip V of Spain disapproved of his tutor, fearing Charles Edward was being brought up by someone who was anti-Catholic. However, James Francis' papal pension was halved as a result and the marriage of Charles Edward's parents soon broke down. His mother went to go and live in a convent.

He was clearly raised as a potential candidate for the throne in the event of a significant change in fortunes for the deposed Stuarts, and this makes it easier to understand the reasons behind appointing an anti-Catholic tutor: an apparently Protestant pretender might make for a more attractive king. Charles Edward learnt to ride, shoot, play tennis and shuttlecock and learnt French and Italian. It was also suggested that he be married off to the daughter of the Austrian Emperor.

In his childhood Charles Edward also contracted smallpox, though he survived. Problems also persisted with his tutor. Charles Edward kicked him and threatened to kill him.

It was while fighting for the Spanish in the Siege of Gaeta, part of the War of the Polish Succession, that Charles Edward began to emerge as the new figurehead for the Jacobite cause. With his upbringing supposed to gift him with all the attributes of an 18th-century monarch and now his military experience, Charles Edward now seemed the more obvious choice to lead the Jacobite movement.

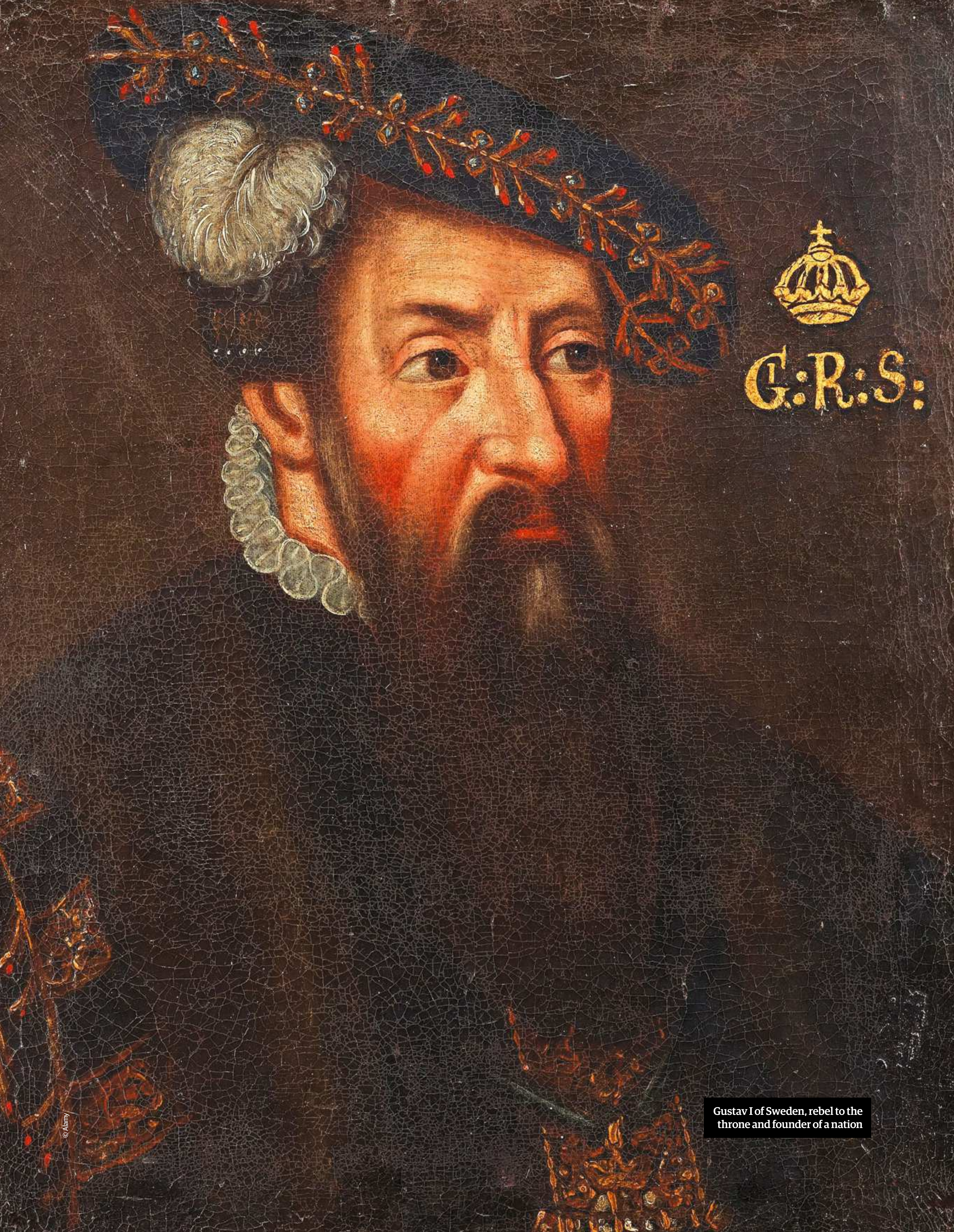
In 1743, James Francis made Charles Edward regent, though without a throne to give a way, this meant very little. It did, however, give Charles Edward the authority within the loyal Jacobite movement to raise an army two years later with the intention of reclaiming his grandfather's throne on his father's behalf. The Scottish highlands was the obvious place to begin, as it was here in their native home country that the Stuarts still claimed support and what was more, the landscape was sparse and disparate; surely conquering the country from the North was easier than from Hastings.

At Loch Sheil, Glenfinnan, near Fort William and Ben Nevis on 19 August 1745, cries rang out, proclaiming King James VIII, with a promise for "prosperity to Scotland and no Union." The message was clear: if James Francis was to be restored to the throne, the Kingdoms of England and Scotland would be separated once again and Scotland would retain its separate cultural and parliamentary identity.

The subsequent uprising failed, but Charles Edward escaped with his life by the skin of his teeth after the Battle of Culloden in 1746. Charles Edward, who had been hiding out on Clanranald island of South Uist in the Outer Hebrides, was helped to safety by a local woman called Flora MacDonald. When he caught wind of British troops searching for him, she disguised him as an Irish maid and sailed him in a boat to the island of Skye. According to the legend, Charles presented Flora with a locket containing a portrait of himself. She was held in the Tower of London but eventually released.

In later life Charles Edward married a lowly German princess, fathered an illegitimate daughter, Charlotte, and turned to alcoholism, embarking on wild schemes to overthrow the Hanoverian monarchy which had no realistic chance of getting off the ground. He died of a stroke, aged 68.

> "The uprising failed but Charles Edward escaped with his life"



Gustav I of Sweden, rebel to the throne and founder of a nation

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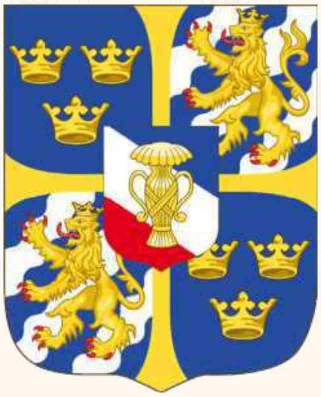


VASA

1523-1654

The influential Swedish dynasty that endured over a century of religious and political turmoil in Scandinavia

Words CHARLIE GINGER & JACK GRIFFITHS

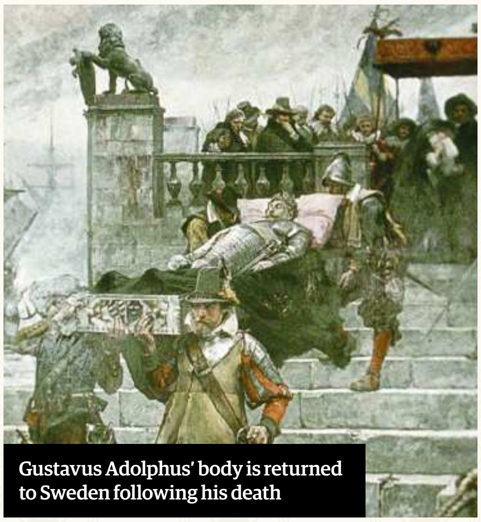
As with many of history's great dynasties, the House of Vasa was born in the crucible of war. This particular conflict erupted in 1521 with the rise of Gustav Vasa in central Sweden.

Seeking to oust the thoroughly unpopular King Christian II, who ruled as head of the Kalmar Union, a network that incorporated Norway (and its overseas territories), Denmark and Sweden, Gustav - recently appointed as commander of the region of Dalarna - marched a force south to Kopparberg and ransacked its mines. This sudden show of aggression encouraged others to follow Gustav in his quest to remove a king who had previously put many of Sweden's nobility to death in the 'Stockholm Bloodbath' the year before.

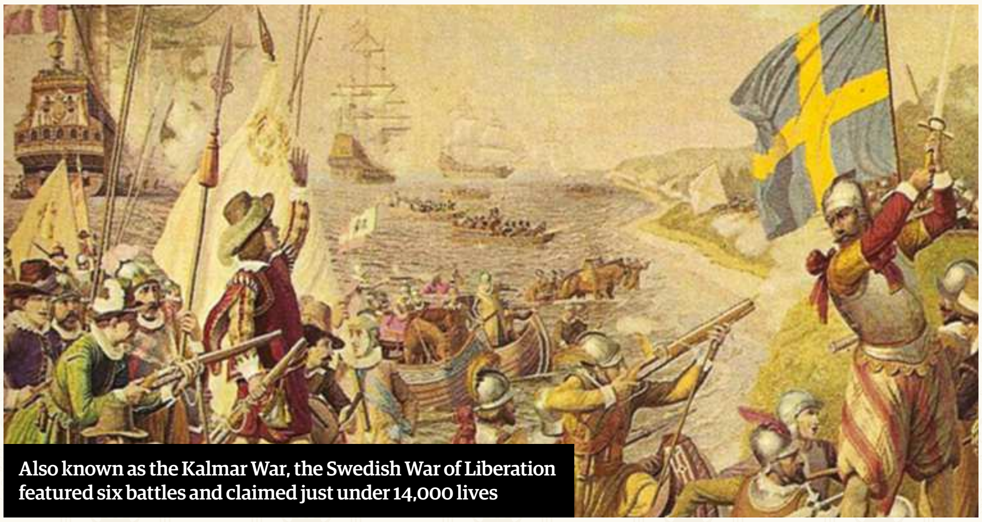
A series of battles followed, but by the year of 1523, Gustav had Stockholm - then a Danish stronghold - surrounded. With a siege of the city failing to achieve a breakthrough, negotiations began. These talks concluded in Gustav granting Stockholm's defenders safe passage out of the city. The war was over, but Gustav's rule had only just begun.

The greatest spoil of the war was Gustav's coronation as king of a newly independent Sweden, after the victory of the previous months of fighting had triggered the dissolution of the Kalmar Union. Secure in his position as sovereign, Gustav ruled until his death in 1560, at which point he was succeeded by his son Eric XIV, who was in turn toppled by his younger brother John III.

In 1587 Gustav's grandson Sigismund III Vasa was appointed king of Poland, a nation the family would rule until 1668. As for Sweden itself, the House of Vasa's reign would last until 1818, during which time the previously minor power would become a major continental force under the legendary 'Lion of the North'.



Gustavus Adolphus' body is returned to Sweden following his death



Also known as the Kalmar War, the Swedish War of Liberation featured six battles and claimed just under 14,000 lives

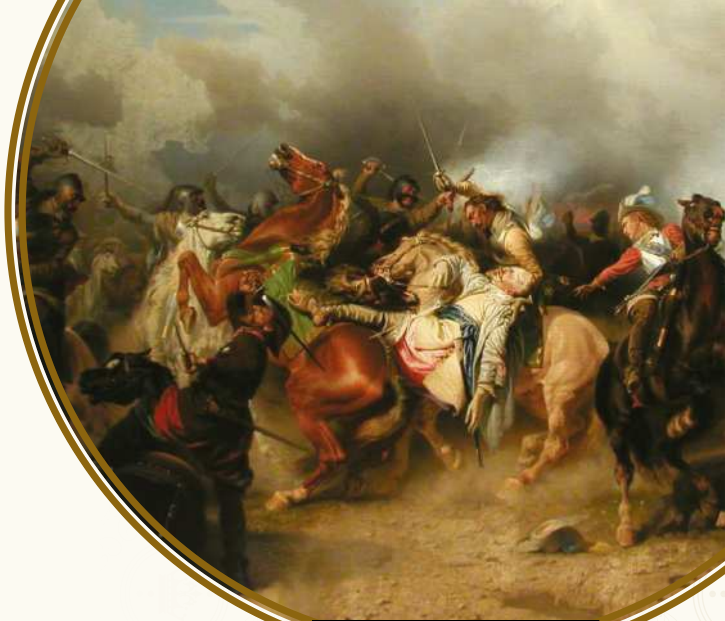
Coat of arms © Fry1989 license CC BY-SA 3.0

The PEDIGREE

Discover the royal line of the legendary Swedish rulers

Order of succession

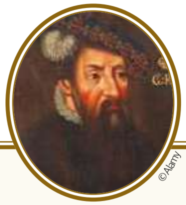
Marriage



Carl Wahlborn's 19th-century interpretation of the Battle of Lützen, in which Gustavus Adolphus died

Catherine of Saxe-Lauenburg
b.1513-d.1535
Catherine's marriage to Gustav was almost entirely political, as the king desired closer relations with German Protestant rulers. The queen never learnt Swedish so conversed with her husband in his broken German.

1
– 1523-1560 –
Gustav I
b.1496-d.1560
Turn to page 42



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Margareta Leijonhufvud
b.1516-d.1551
Gustav's second wife was the daughter of a noble executed in the Stockholm Bloodbath. She was very influential but not politically active, instead dedicating her time to family life. She had six children with Gustav, which took its toll on her health.

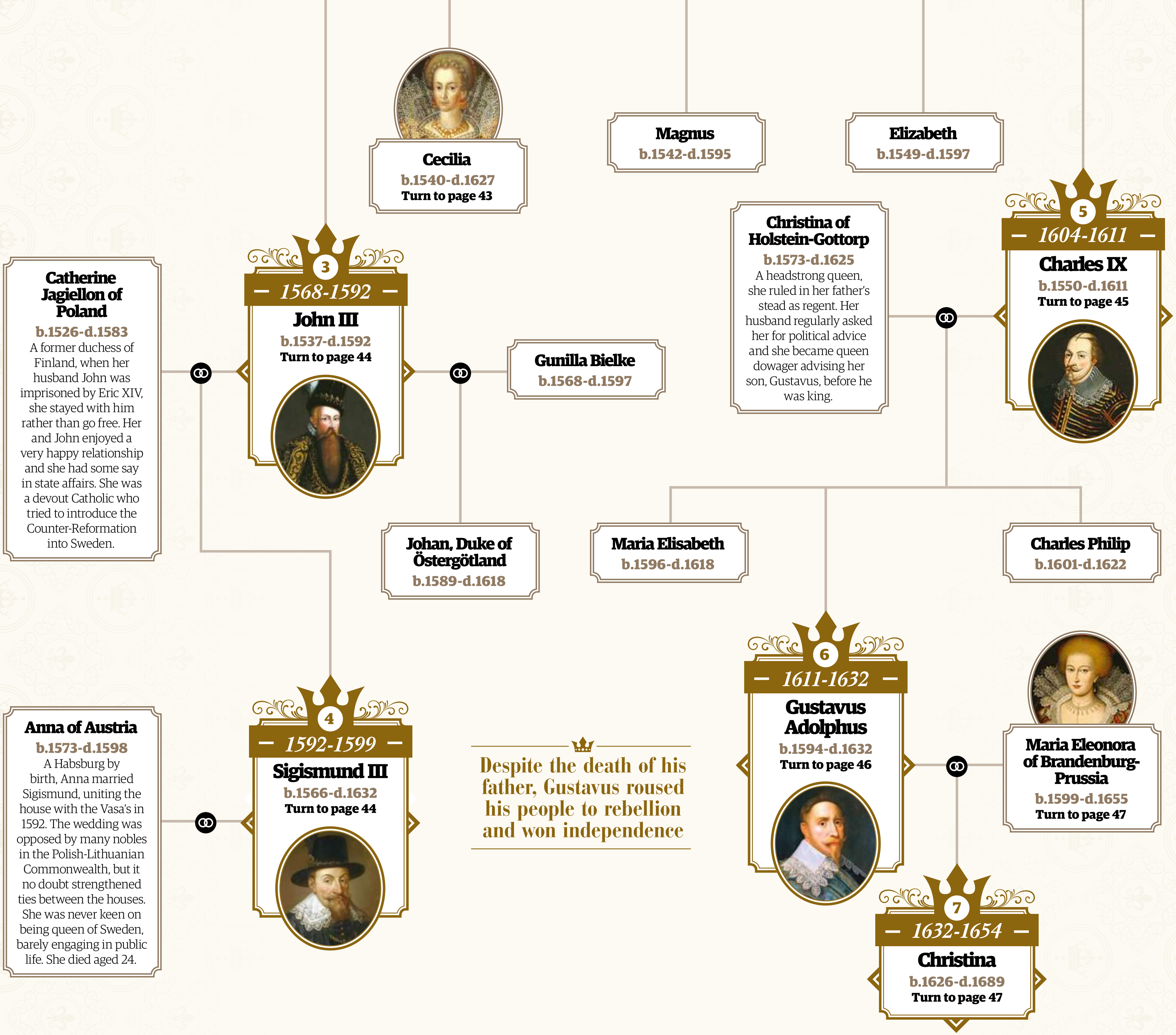
2
– 1560-1568 –
Eric XIV
b.1533-d.1577
Turn to page 43

Karin Månsdotter
b.1550-d.1612

Sigrid
b.1566-d.1633

Gustav
b.1568-d.1607

From 1599, Charles IX ruled Sweden as regent until he officially became king in 1604



Catherine Jagiellon of Poland
b.1526-d.1583
A former duchess of Finland, when her husband John was imprisoned by Eric XIV, she stayed with him rather than go free. Her and John enjoyed a very happy relationship and she had some say in state affairs. She was a devout Catholic who tried to introduce the Counter-Reformation into Sweden.

3
1568-1592
John III
b.1537-d.1592
Turn to page 44

Cecilia
b.1540-d.1627
Turn to page 43

Gunilla Bielke
b.1568-d.1597

Johan, Duke of Östergötland
b.1589-d.1618

Magnus
b.1542-d.1595

Elizabeth
b.1549-d.1597

Christina of Holstein-Gottorp
b.1573-d.1625
A headstrong queen, she ruled in her father's stead as regent. Her husband regularly asked her for political advice and she became queen dowager advising her son, Gustavus, before he was king.

5
1604-1611
Charles IX
b.1550-d.1611
Turn to page 45

Maria Elisabeth
b.1596-d.1618

Charles Philip
b.1601-d.1622

6
1611-1632
Gustavus Adolphus
b.1594-d.1632
Turn to page 46

Maria Eleonora of Brandenburg-Prussia
b.1599-d.1655
Turn to page 47

7
1632-1654
Christina
b.1626-d.1689
Turn to page 47

Anna of Austria
b.1573-d.1598
A Habsburg by birth, Anna married Sigismund, uniting the house with the Vasa's in 1592. The wedding was opposed by many nobles in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, but it no doubt strengthened ties between the houses. She was never keen on being queen of Sweden, barely engaging in public life. She died aged 24.

4
1592-1599
Sigismund III
b.1566-d.1632
Turn to page 44

> Despite the death of his father, Gustavus roused his people to rebellion and won independence

Gustav I

b.1496-d.1560 1523-1560

Father of a dynasty

In 1523, the Kalmar Union of Denmark, Sweden and Norway came to an end after 126 years. The Swedish elite were dissatisfied with the increasing Danish influence and decided to become an independent state. The movement was led by Sten Sture, the regent of Sweden and was assisted by Erik Vasa and his son, Gustav. Gustav was captured during the uprising in 1516 and confined to Kalø, an island fortress off the coast of Denmark.

He escaped back to Sweden by 1520 and took leadership of the Nationalists after the death of his father in the 'Stockholm Bloodbath'. Their murderer was Christian II of Denmark, who now had control over all of Sweden except its capital, Stockholm. Despite the death of his father at the hands of Christian, Gustav roused his people to rebellion and won independence. He became regent and then the first king of the newly formed House of Vasa on 6 June 1523 as Sweden entered a new era.

Gustav I inherited a nation torn apart by the wars. The nobility had been decimated and the country owed huge debts. He oversaw a series of sweeping reforms in the now in the new sovereign nation. In line with the Reformation, Lutheranism was adopted as the Christian branch of choice and the economy was built up, partly using plunder from Catholic churches. Gustav wasn't a devout Protestant and his attempts to join the Schmalkaldic League were motivated by military and political gains rather than religious reasons.

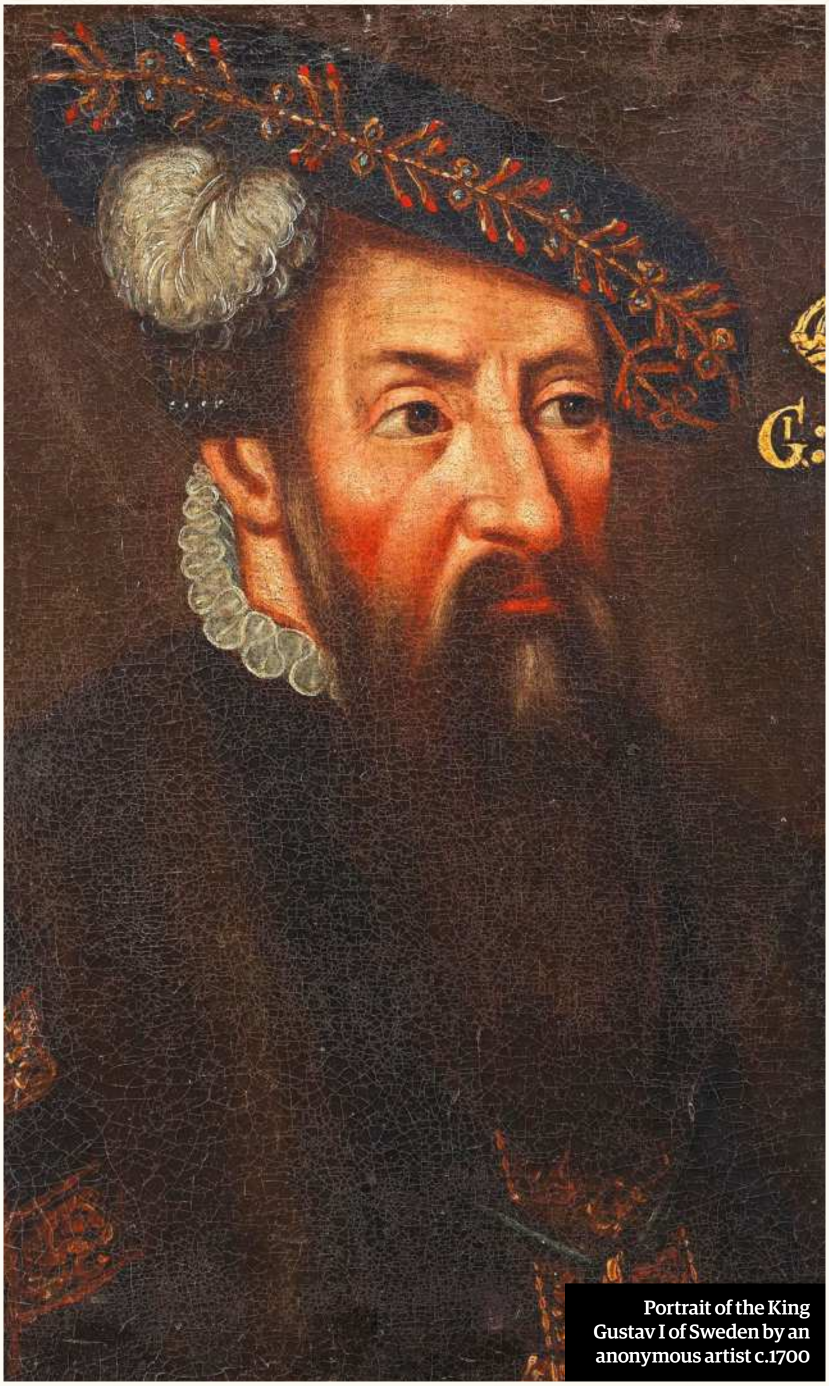
To ensure the best chances of prosperity, the nation was centralised to Stockholm and the power of the nobility was curbed. A selection of appointed sheriffs would scour the land collecting taxes and any rebels not willing to pay were first written a personal yet threatening letter from the king and if they still didn't comply, they would be killed. Peace was made with Denmark as Gustav allied himself with the new Danish king, Frederick I, and the Hanseatic League.

The mostly peaceful foreign policy was interrupted by involvement in the Count's Feud (1534-36) and the Russo-Swedish War (1554-57), which both aimed at completely liberating Sweden from external foreign influences. Even though Gustav I forced the Danes from his land, he was more than happy to allow intellectuals from the continent into his realm. To combat a shortage of trained Swedes in the 1540s, he sanctioned an influx of German administrators to benefit the economy.

The reforms sowed the seeds for a Swedish Empire in the Baltic to rival that of the Kalmar Union. Some call Gustav's measures tyrannical and his ideology of a centralised Protestant state was by no means instantly popular. Revolts were commonplace with the last only ending in 1543.

Despite his despotic tendencies, he was a shrewd ruler and certainly changed the landscape of Sweden as the nation went on the road to empire. The results of Gustav I's kingship were increased relations with the rest of Europe both politically and culturally and the arrival of Sweden as a minor power on the European continent. He gave the country its first modern standing army and created the Swedish Navy.

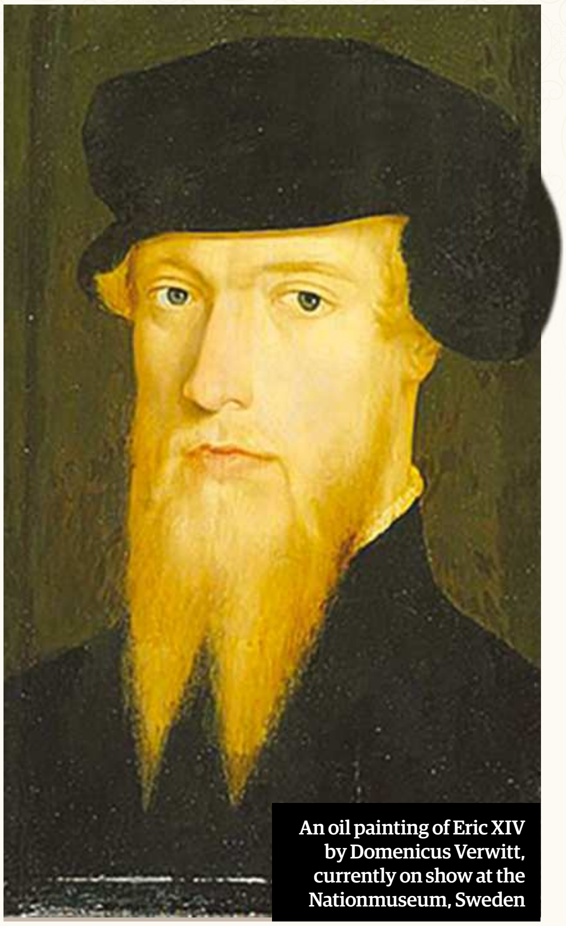
A hereditary monarchy rather than an elective one was set up, confirming the House of Vasa's undisputed rule over Sweden for many years. Gustav I ruled for 37 years and his descendants continued to reign until 1818. He is described by historians as one of Europe's 'new monarchs' who helped the continent progress.



Portrait of the King Gustav I of Sweden by an anonymous artist c.1700

© Alamy

> "Despite his despotic tendencies, he was a shrewd ruler"



An oil painting of Eric XIV by Domenicus Verwitt, currently on show at the Nationmuseum, Sweden

Eric XIV

b.1533-d.1577 ♛ 1523-1560

The winner of the game

After Gustav's death, his sons were all granted Swedish territories and his eldest son from his marriage to Catherine of Saxe-Lauenburg, Eric Vasa, claimed the throne. Eric XIV was skilled in linguistics and military science but had a barbaric streak in his nature.

His first move was a selfish yet efficient one. The 1561 Articles of Arboga reduced the powers of his half-brothers in their attempts to vie for the Swedish throne and introduced a new constitution a year later that changed the nobility's role in military matters. Eric shared his father's disdain for the Danes and expanded the navy to allow it to compete in the Baltic. This brought his kingdom into the Polish sphere of interest but his half-brother John, duke of Finland (later John III), did a deal with the Poles first, signing a treaty with King Sigismund II who agreed to marry Eric's daughter off against Eric's wishes. The Swedish king had the last laugh and he imprisoned John and his wife the next year.

The Swedish expansion didn't go unnoticed and persuaded Frederick II, king of Denmark and Norway to ally with both Lübeck and Poland and declare war on Sweden. The ensuing Nordic Seven Years War (1563-1570) resulted in a bloody stalemate with Denmark and its allies but had a disastrous effect on the king. Eric led his forces effectively during the war but the grind of conflict led him to lose judgement and he became paranoid and fearful of treason. He ordered the killing of the leading members of the Sture family, an influential clan in the country, and his chief advisor, Jöran Persson, was imprisoned in bizarre circumstances. He also had his mistress, Karin Månsdotter, crowned queen despite protests from the nobility. He was disposed of in 1568 by his half-brother John, while Eric was left to rot and eventually die in jail from a rumoured arsenic-laced pea soup.

Cecilia

b.1540-d.1627

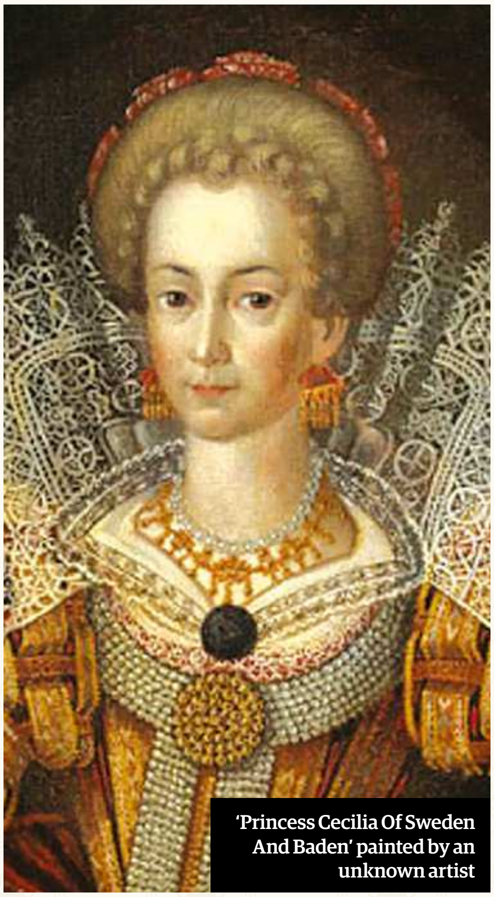
Wild child of the dynasty

Gustav I and Eric XIV had been keen on an alliance with Tudor England. Eric sent over his sisters, Elizabeth, Katarina, Anna Maria and Cecilia to the British Isles. At the wedding of Katarina to Edzard of East Frisia in 1559, the groom's younger brother, Georg Johan Vedentz, became smitten with Cecilia and they retired to the princess's quarters at Vadstena Castle. A guard spotted the misdemeanour and after bursting through the door, he was shocked to find a scantily clad princess. Eric ordered their arrest. The 'Vadstena affair' was the talk of Europe.

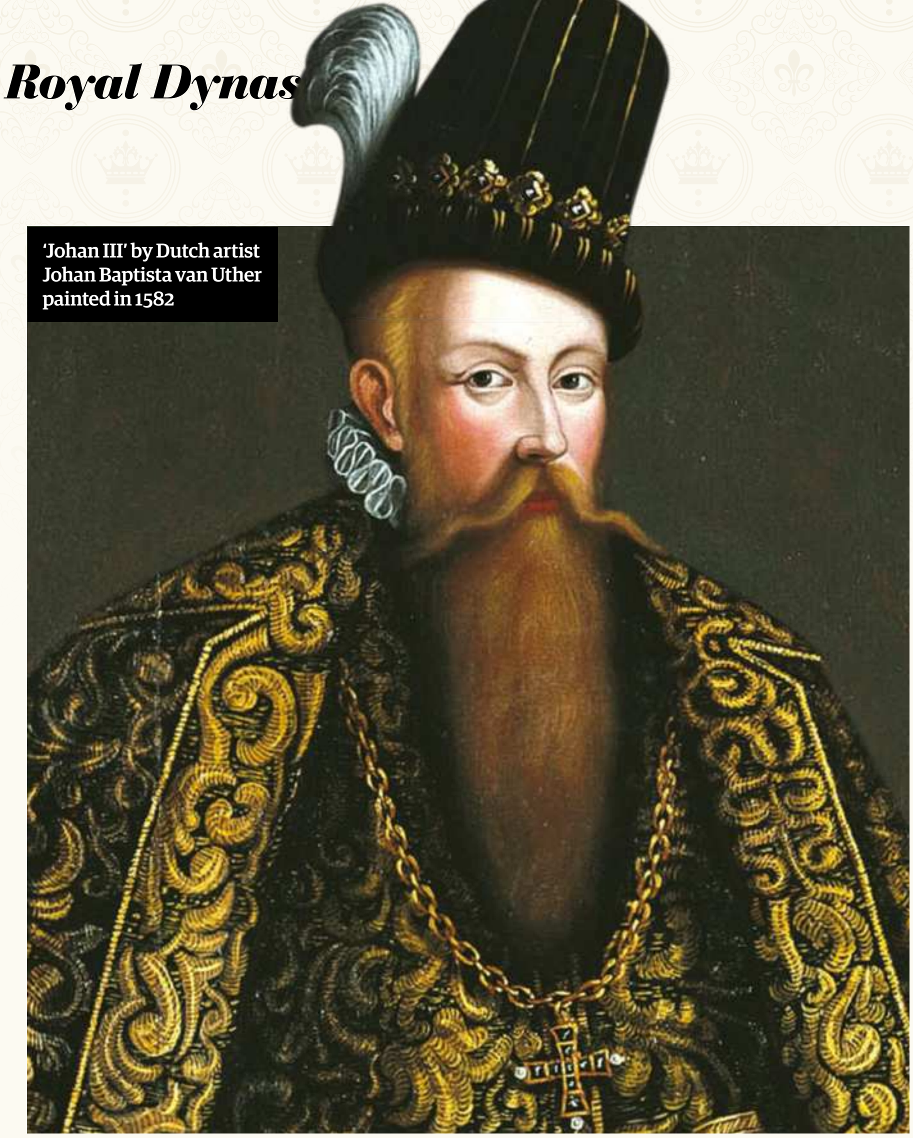
The pair were due to be executed but Eric relented and their lives were spared. After a series of unsuccessful courtships, Eric wrote to the former target of his affection, Queen Elizabeth I, to arrange an English noble for his sister's hand. To his surprise, Cecilia had married Christopher II, Margrave of Baden-Rodemachern. Soon after her marriage, Cecilia set off for England anyway, having built up a friendship with Elizabeth I over years of correspondence. The quickest route to England was blocked by the Danish Navy so the pregnant Cecilia was forced to take the treacherous journey through Finland and Russia and then onto Prussia through to Friseland and eventually Dover.

The party made it to London on 11 September 1565 and Cecilia gave birth to a baby boy four days later. She stayed under Elizabeth's hospitality until November when she left the country after her husband had been imprisoned for debt. She decided not to return to Sweden and instead relocated to her husband's home in Baden-Rodemachern.

After Christopher died in 1575, she lived the rest of her life in poverty and converted to Catholicism. Cecilia died in Brussels in 1627 but lived long enough to see her nephew, Gustavus Adolphus, decimate Catholic armies in the name of Protestantism during the Thirty Years' War.



'Princess Cecilia Of Sweden And Baden' painted by an unknown artist



'Johan III' by Dutch artist Johan Baptista van Uther painted in 1582

John III

b.1537-d.1592 ♛ 1568-1592

The insecure Catholic

After the insecurity of Eric's final few years, Sweden needed a ruler to steady the ship. John III would be far from that. John had served as the duke of Finland from 1556 but he was not content with just ruling Finland and came into conflict with his brother, Eric. With help from Poland, he overthrew Eric in 1568, proclaiming himself as ridding Sweden of a tyrant and decided to sit on the throne of Sweden himself, reigning for a total of 24 years.

His first notable move as king of Sweden was a peaceful one as he sought peace with Denmark under the Treaty of Stettin in 1570. Eric's Estonian territories were maintained as Sweden emerged victorious over Ivan the Terrible's Russia in the Livonian War (1558-83) but the former king's devotion to Protestantism was lost. John was a deeply religious man and had grand ambitions of his own to rule a country whose church complied with Rome. John created his own fusion of Lutheranism and Roman Catholicism that was noted down in a so called Red Book, penned by the king and his advisors. A country that had now been Protestant for decades, Rome rejected a Swedish return to Catholicism but John continued to impose Catholic ideals on Sweden.

Always keen to keep a hand in foreign affairs, John put forward his son Sigismund as the next king of Poland. Sigismund was the son of John and his first wife, Catherine Jagiellon, who was part of the Polish-Lithuanian royal family. This offer was terminated, however, when the Polish insisted he keep to his word from the Treaty of Stettin and return Estonia to Poland. The Swedish nobility, however, decided to wade in on the matter, seeing Poland as a useful ally against the Russians and Sigismund became king of Poland in 1587 and then king of Sweden after John's death.

Sigismund III

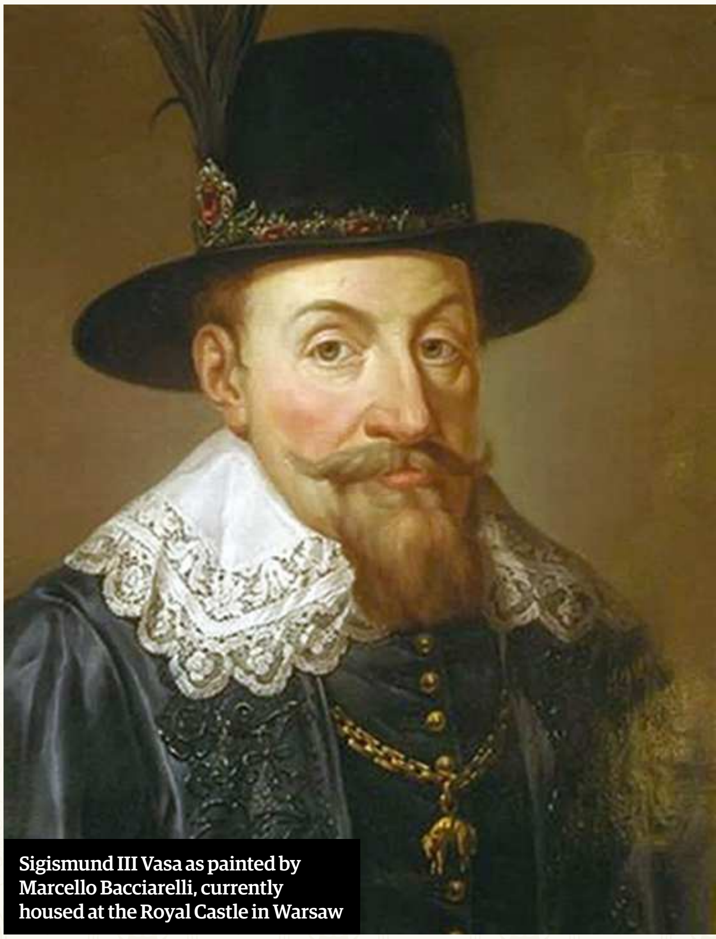
b.1566-d.1632

♛ Poland: 1587-1632, Sweden: 1592-1599

The joiner of nations

The king of Poland since 1587, Sigismund III acceded to the Swedish throne after the death of his father John in 1592. Maximilian of Austria was also a candidate for the throne but Sigismund III won out due to his mother Catherine Jagiellon's Polish heritage. By all accounts Sigismund was a war monger and Poland was embroiled in no fewer than four wars during his reign, but he did have reason to hold Sweden in disdain.

Sigismund was born in Gripsholm Castle while his parents were imprisoned there, suffering under Eric's iron fist. He was brought up as a Catholic in a Lutheran country and he left Sweden when he got the chance, winning the Polish royal election in 1587 after the death of his uncle, King Stephen Báthory. He married Austrian archduchess Anna in 1592, the same year as the death of his father John. He returned to Sweden promptly and was officially crowned king, uniting the Vasa and Jagiellon dynasties.



Sigismund III Vasa as painted by Marcello Bacciarelli, currently housed at the Royal Castle in Warsaw

“His uncle lost faith in his nephew and desired the throne for himself”

The Swedes were not best pleased that a Catholic exile was on the throne and antagonism turned to action when Sigismund attempted to enforce Catholicism on the country once again. His uncle, Charles, lost faith in his nephew and desired the throne for himself. The Swedish parliament agreed and in Stockholm made the decision to dispose of him and crowned the 54-year-old Charles. The one bargaining chip given to Sigismund was that his son Władysław would become king of Sweden if he converted to the Protestant cause.

Back in Poland and after the death of Anna of Austria, Sigismund turned his attention to conquest. He led the Polish Commonwealth but his Counter-Reformation policies alienated him from the upper echelons of the Polish nobility, ‘the szlachta’. The 1607 Zebrzydowski Rebellion would be the greatest test of his mettle yet and it initiated a civil war that the monarchy eventually won in the Battle of Guzów. During the domestic disturbances, Sigismund married his first wife’s sister, Constantia, strengthening relations with the Habsburgs in the process.

He later expanded the Commonwealth to its greatest extent as it annexed Estonia, Latvia and Finland. The acquisition of the latter territory caught Sweden’s attention and the Polish-Muscovite War (1609-18) broke out. Sigismund was intent on taking back Sweden and the wars ebbed and flowed over the Baltic Sea. Poland also advanced into Russia and successfully conquered Moscow in 1610 when the Russians were reeling under the ‘Time of Troubles’. His son Ladislaus was elected tsar but within two years the Russians returned with an improved army under Prince Dmitry Pozharsky who would be known as a Saviour of the Motherland for expelling the Polish forces. Michael I became the tsar of Russia in 1613, beginning the long rule of the House of Romanov. Poland was now having to fight on various fronts with Gustavus Adolphus’ Sweden taking Riga in the north while Ottoman forces invaded Moldova in the south. All this war mongering would help stoke up the Thirty Years’ War (1618-1648) that would bring death and devastation upon the continent never seen before

Sigismund died in 1632, his parting gift being the Truce of Altmark with Sweden in 1629. Peace with Russia was made after Sigismund’s death, in 1634, under his son, Ladislaus, but war continued with Sweden to the north and the growing threat of the Ottoman Empire from the south. Sigismund’s taste for war resulted in the shrinking of the Commonwealth and a blot on Poland’s international prestige and standing. The House of Vasa lasted in Poland until 1668, when the abdication of Jan Kazimierz ended the line.

Charles IX

b.1550-d.1611 ♛ 1604-1611

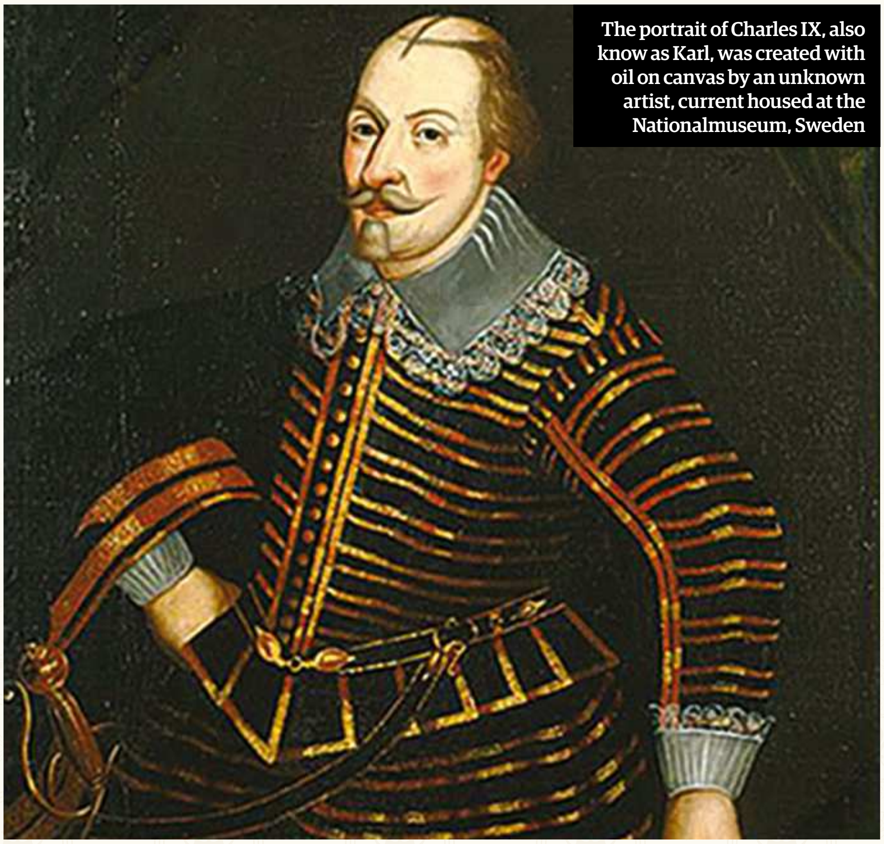
Independence restorer

Sigismund’s demise installed his uncle Charles on the throne. Charles was the youngest son of Gustav I and the half brother of former ruler Eric. He helped his brother, John, successfully rebel against Eric but found himself frozen out under the new regime. He was a Protestant and disapproved of John’s Red Book.

After King Eric died, he was on the periphery as John’s son Sigismund claimed the throne. Sigismund was already king of Poland and Charles was concerned about the possibility of another Catholic king. He called the Convention of Uppsala in 1593, which requested that Protestantism would remain as the national Swedish religion even with Sigismund in power. Determined for history not to repeat itself, Charles was forever in the ear of the aristocracy, fuelling their fears of an absentee monarch. The convention was passed but the agreement soon turned sour and civil war was upon Sweden once again.

Sigismund’s claim to the kingship of Sweden was eventually ended for good after Charles’ forces defeated the Poles at the Battle of Stångebro in 1598. The mainly Lutheran population had always been wary of Sigismund so Charles had the backing of the people from the start. The nobility wanted to limit his power but he brutally purged his upper-class rivals.

Hostilities between the nations soon erupted again and the Polish-Swedish wars got underway in 1605 and would last until 1660 and the Peace of Oliva. Charles also campaigned up in the north in the Kalmar War (1611-13) against the king of Denmark, Christian IV. The Polish-Swedish Wars would also rage on after Charles, as Gustavus Adolphus came to the throne in a time of turmoil in the Baltic and Scandinavian states. Without much of an aristocracy to call on, Charles used his administrative skills to foster economic growth. His brief yet significant rule came to an end with his death in 1611. Gustavus stepped up to the plate.



The portrait of Charles IX, also know as Karl, was created with oil on canvas by an unknown artist, current housed at the Nationalmuseum, Sweden

Gustavus Adolphus

b.1594-d.1632 ♛ 1611-1632

The Lion of the North

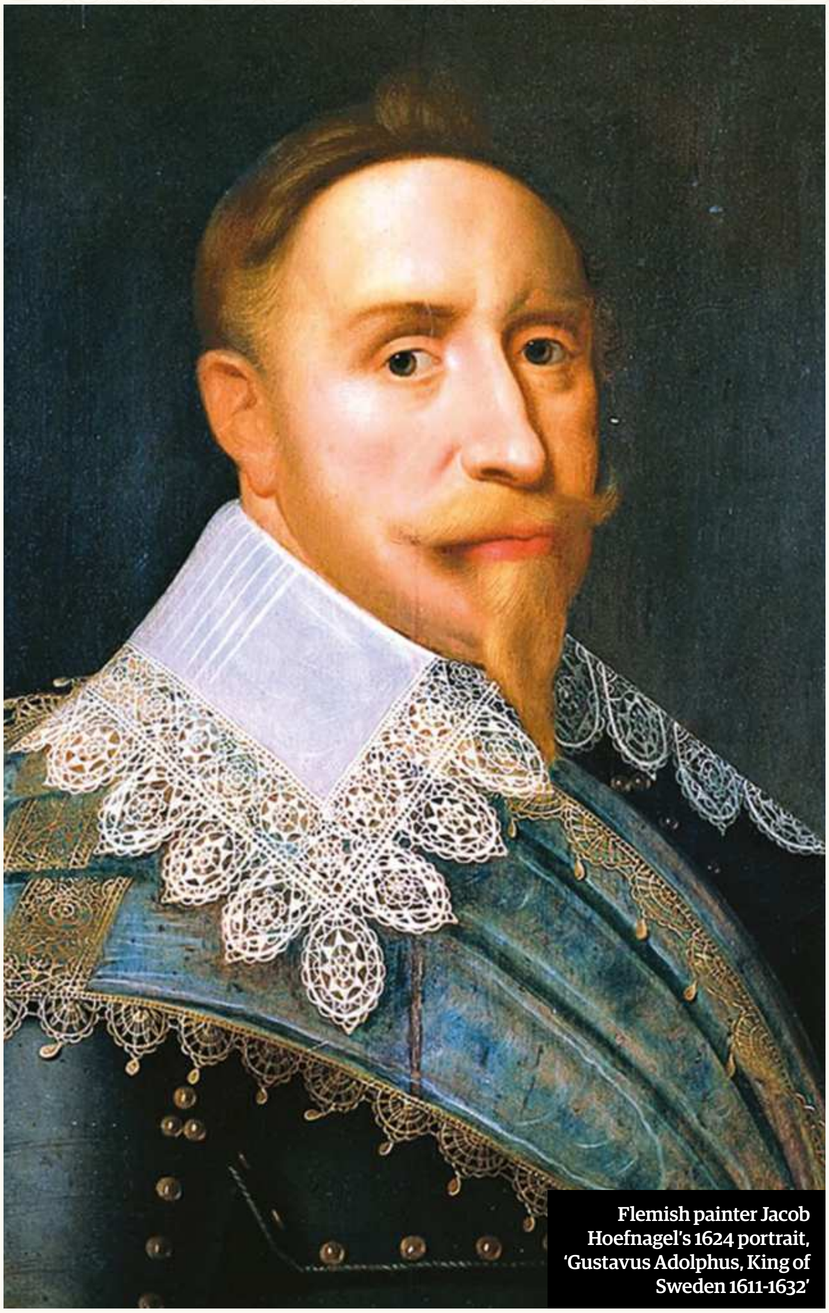
Little more than an unknown 17-year-old prince when he became king, Gustav II Adolf, known as Gustavus Adolphus, would die a hero and his nation's greatest ever king. The eldest son of Charles IX and Christina of Holstein, he would inherit a fractured kingdom that had almost constant pressure on its borders from other powers.

Being a 17-year-old in power was no easy task, but Gustavus was far from a pushover and had intelligence to match. He was educated by scholar Johan Skytte in classics, law, history and theology and was fluent in several languages. In 1611, the king signed the Accession Charter that forced him to outline all policies in line with the Riksrad council of nobility. This resulted in a harmonious relationship between monarch and aristocracy. With Sweden united, Gustavus turned his attention to a holy war.

A devout Protestant, Gustavus saw it as his mission to uphold the reformation in Germany. The 1629 Treaty of Altmark ended Sweden's war with Poland and by the end of the year he had regained the Baltic Sea coast for his country and dominated sea trade in the region. In June 1630, 4,000 Swedish soldiers landed in Pomerania, northern Germany and captured both Stettin and Neumark. Gustavus' army waded into the already raging Thirty Years' War and was financed by a huge grant of 1 million livres for every year of fighting by their French allies under Cardinal Richelieu. Their common enemy was the Holy Roman Empire who, led by Ferdinand II, desired to restore Catholicism. Richelieu was a Catholic but was also a pragmatic man and allied himself with Gustavus. After the initial gains, he was concerned his Protestant allies would side with their kin in Germany but the Catholic invasion of Protestant-stronghold Magdeburg by the Catholic League made it simple unite with the Golden King and enact retribution.

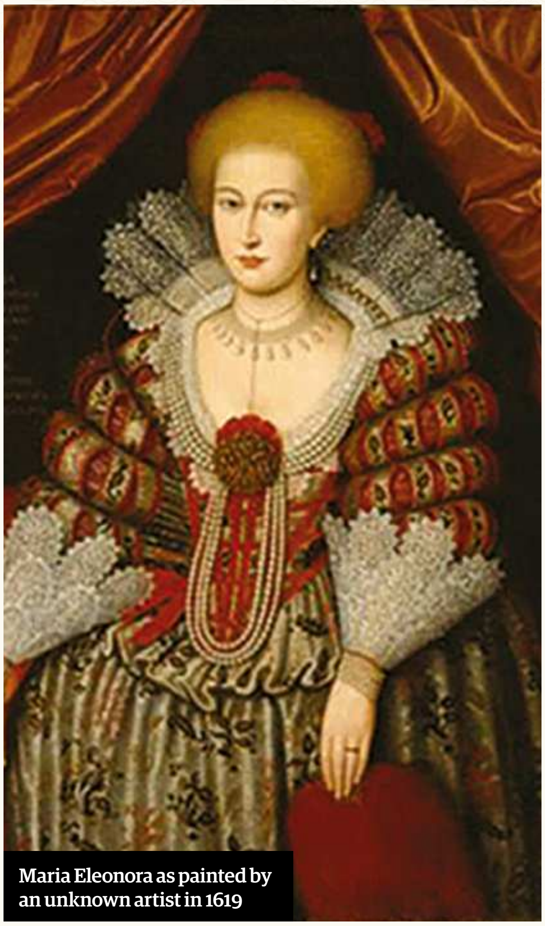
The burning of Magdeburg by count Tilly only made the Protestant cause stronger. Gustavus could now also call on the Dutch for assistance and he marched on Berlin before engaging Tilly in a grudge match at the Battle of Breitenfeld in September 1631. Gustavus' force of 24,000 annihilated Tilly's 35,000 men who were forced to make a hasty retreat south to Bavaria. The Swedes were now the undisputed masters of Central Europe as the invasion force occupied the cities of Mainz, Bamberg, Würzburg and Prague. Gustavus dealt out his territorial earnings to his generals as Central Europe belonged to him. By December 1631, the inspirational Swedish king was back on the warpath and aimed to conquer the remainder of the Holy Roman Empire. The Swedes defeated Tilly in the Battle of Rain in March 1632 with Augsburg and Munich now under Swedish influence.

Gustavus' plan was to now establish two Protestant leagues in Germany, one for military and one for administration, and would ensure Sweden's future as a major nation. However, it was now that the Swedes met their match as Ferdinand ordered his attack dog, Albrecht von Wallenstein, into battle. Gustavus and Waklenstein met at Lützen in 1632. The epic battle culminated in a defeat for Wallenstein who retreated into Bohemia but the Swedes had lost their greatest asset of all. Gustavus Adolphus, the Lion of the North, was dead, the victim of a mass melee on the battlefield. This put the Protestant forces into disarray and by 1635 the Swedes had all retreated. Both Sweden and the Protestant cause in Europe had lost a leader who had changed the course of religious and political history.



Flemish painter Jacob Hoefnagel's 1624 portrait, 'Gustavus Adolphus, King of Sweden 1611-1632'

> "Gustavus was far from a pushover and had intelligence to match"



Maria Eleonora as painted by an unknown artist in 1619

Maria Eleonora

b.1599-d.1655

Gustavus' loyal lioness

The daughter of the Elector of Brandenburg, Maria Eleonora was born in Königsberg, Germany. When she was 20 years old her life changed forever. A mysterious stranger arrived in the Electoral Palace by the name of Captain Gars. He was, in fact, no other than Gustavus Adolphus who had come to request her hand in marriage. As her father had now passed, Eleonora's brother had the final say over the marriage. He decided to prohibit it on the grounds that he did not want to displease Sigismund, the king of Poland who was enjoying his brief tenure upon the Swedish throne at the time. Love prevailed and Maria secretly journeyed to Stockholm in search of Gustavus. The couple married at the Royal Castle of Three Crowns in the city on 25 November 1620.

The king and queen tried for children but all died in infancy apart from Christina who would grow up healthy. However, Gustavus didn't witness her childhood as he was campaigning in the Thirty Years' War but he kept tabs on her from afar and insisted on a male upbringing. Upon her husband leaving for war in 1624, Eleonora gave him a red embroidered saddle as a New Year's present.

The queen would not see her king again until January 1632 when they met briefly in Frankfurt am Main. This would be the last time she would ever see her husband as he fell on the fields of Europe just three months later. Maria Eleonora was only informed when the Gustavus' heart was sent to her back at the castle in Stockholm. The queen was devastated and went into a period of deep mourning. She was so distraught that she was seen as unfit to rule and with Christina taken away from her she fled to Denmark. Maria Eleonora only returned to her beloved Sweden in 1648 after peace had finally ended the war. She watched on as her daughter Christina was crowned in 1650 and died five years later, aged 56.

Christina

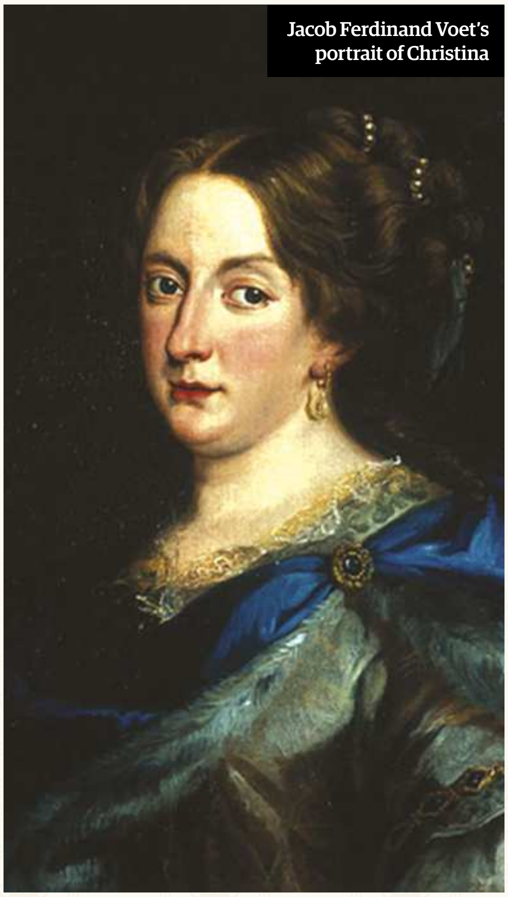
b.1626-d.1689 ♛ 1604-1611

The final Vasa

Christina was entrusted with following her father, the most influential man of a Swedish generation. Her upbringing was shrouded by controversy as midwives mistakenly believed her to be a boy and the heir to the kingship. Christina studied hard but also gained skills in hunting and sport. At the age of six, news filtered through that her father had been killed and she would be queen-elect. Due to her youth, statesman Axel Oxenstierna assumed the rule of Sweden at the head of a coalition of nobles. Christina was eventually crowned queen in 1644, aged 18.

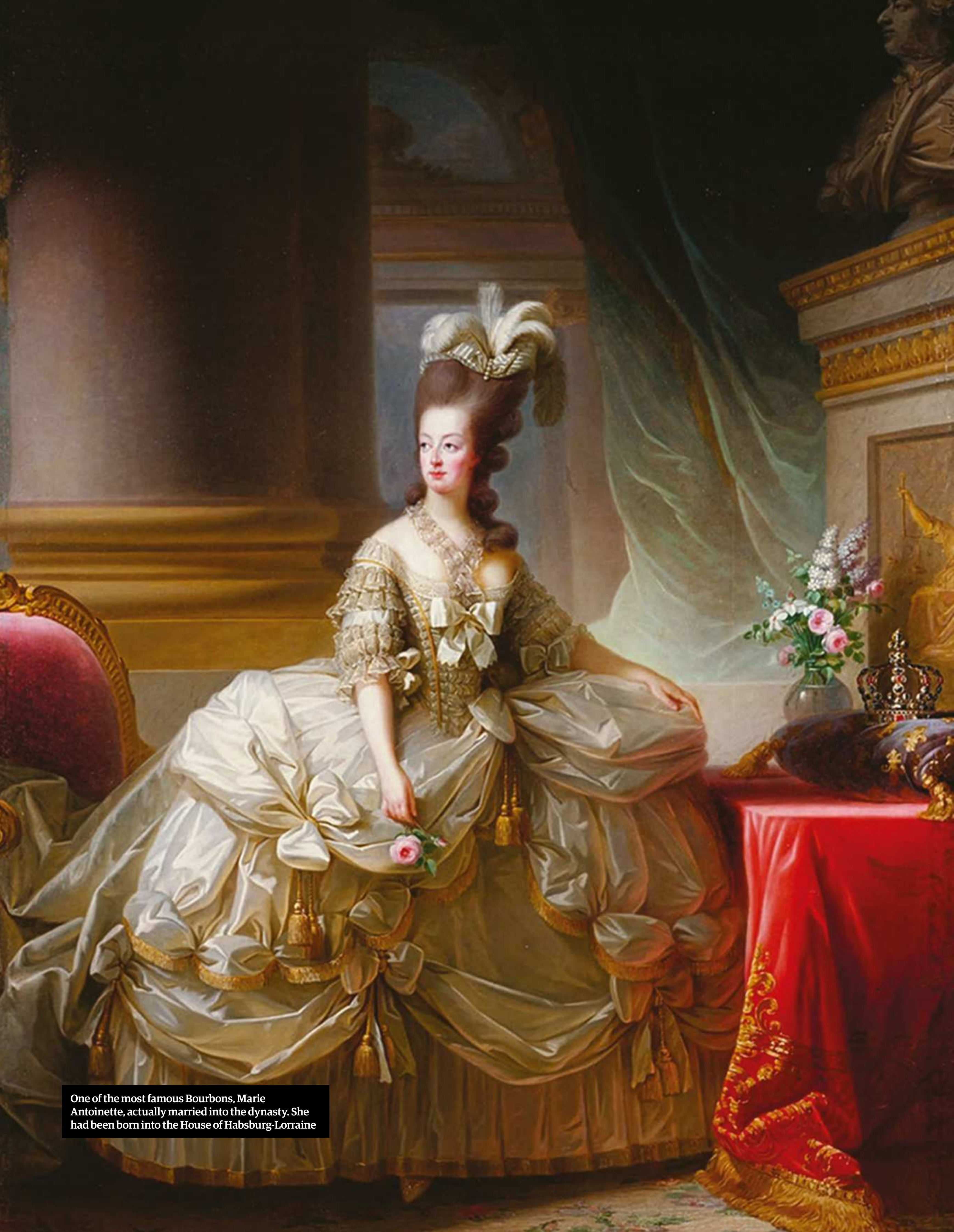
Despite being close to her father, Christina despised Oxenstierna and against his wishes, she sanctioned the ending of Swedish involvement in the war in the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. During her reign, she put forward many ideas of learning through science and literature. She threw money behind the arts, sponsoring hundreds of theatres and operas as Stockholm became a centre of culture and learning. Christina had initiated a period of educational prosperity and had engaged in talks with French philosopher René Descartes about a new academy. Tragically, he suddenly died shortly after of pneumonia and she spiralled into a deep depression. She took her grief out on her nation and lamented her belief that she had failed to impart learning on a barbaric country like Sweden.

Christina was berated constantly over succession and decided to name Charles Gustavus as her successor. This infuriated the Poles who threatened all-out war. By 1651, Christina saw the only option available to her as abdication. Two years later, she followed up on her word and, disguised as a knight, travelled south to Rome. She soon missed the regal life and tried and failed to become queen of Naples. She lived out the rest of her life in Rome and with no heirs. The Vasa line ended on 19 April 1689.



Jacob Ferdinand Voet's portrait of Christina

© Getty Images



One of the most famous Bourbons, Marie Antoinette, actually married into the dynasty. She had been born into the House of Habsburg-Lorraine

BOURBON

1589-1792

The dynasty that saw France rise to the dizzying height of Europe's most powerful nation before its spectacular downfall into revolution

Words KATHARINE MARSH & JESSICA LEGGETT

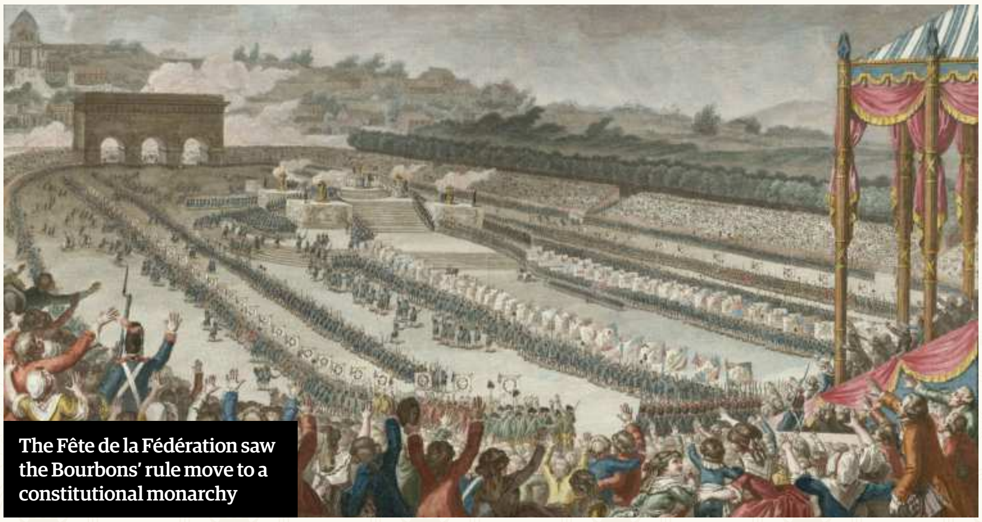
The Bourbons were used to being sidelined, but they would make sure that they had their time in the sun.

Starting life as mere dukes, the dynasty – one offshoot branch of the House of Capet – found itself second best to the House of Valois. While the Valois ran the kingdom, the rule was that the line of succession must go through males according to primogeniture, and this worked in their favour – at least for a few centuries.

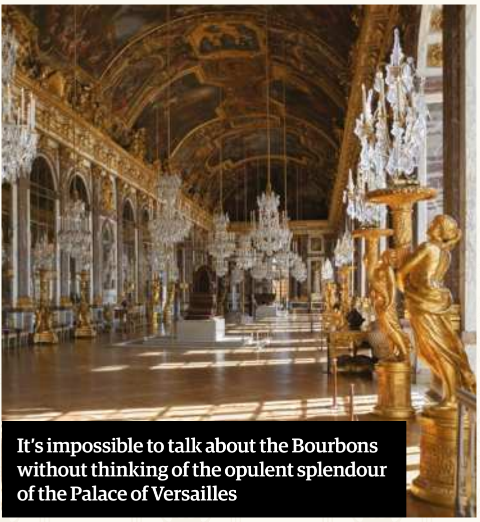
In 1589, luck finally ran out for the ruling Valois dynasty. With no male heir to continue the line, their reign came to an and, and Henry IV ushered in the rule of the Bourbons in France, while simultaneously governing the kingdom of Navarre to the south. While his rise hadn't been smooth – he had barely won the War of the Three Henrys, as three nobles with the same first name battled it out for the top spot – the Bourbons eventualy ruled France until the early 1800s.

The House of Bourbon has bequeathed to history some of the most famous monarchs of all time. Louis XIV, known by his nickname of the Sun King, introduced absolute monarchy to France, while some of his successors found themselves caught up in the bloody French Revolution, losing their riches and their heads in the name of democracy.

Today, the French Bourbons are remembered for their vivacious court and extravagant lifestyles, and millions of people still flock to the Palace of Versailles every year to see the splendour of the Hall of Mirrors and the Gallery of Great Battles first-hand. The royal dynasty is also known today for reaching thrones elsewhere in Europe. Until 1861, Francis II wore the crown of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, while Spain is still ruled today by a cadet branch, the House of Bourbon-Anjou.



The Fête de la Fédération saw the Bourbons' rule move to a constitutional monarchy



It's impossible to talk about the Bourbons without thinking of the opulent splendour of the Palace of Versailles

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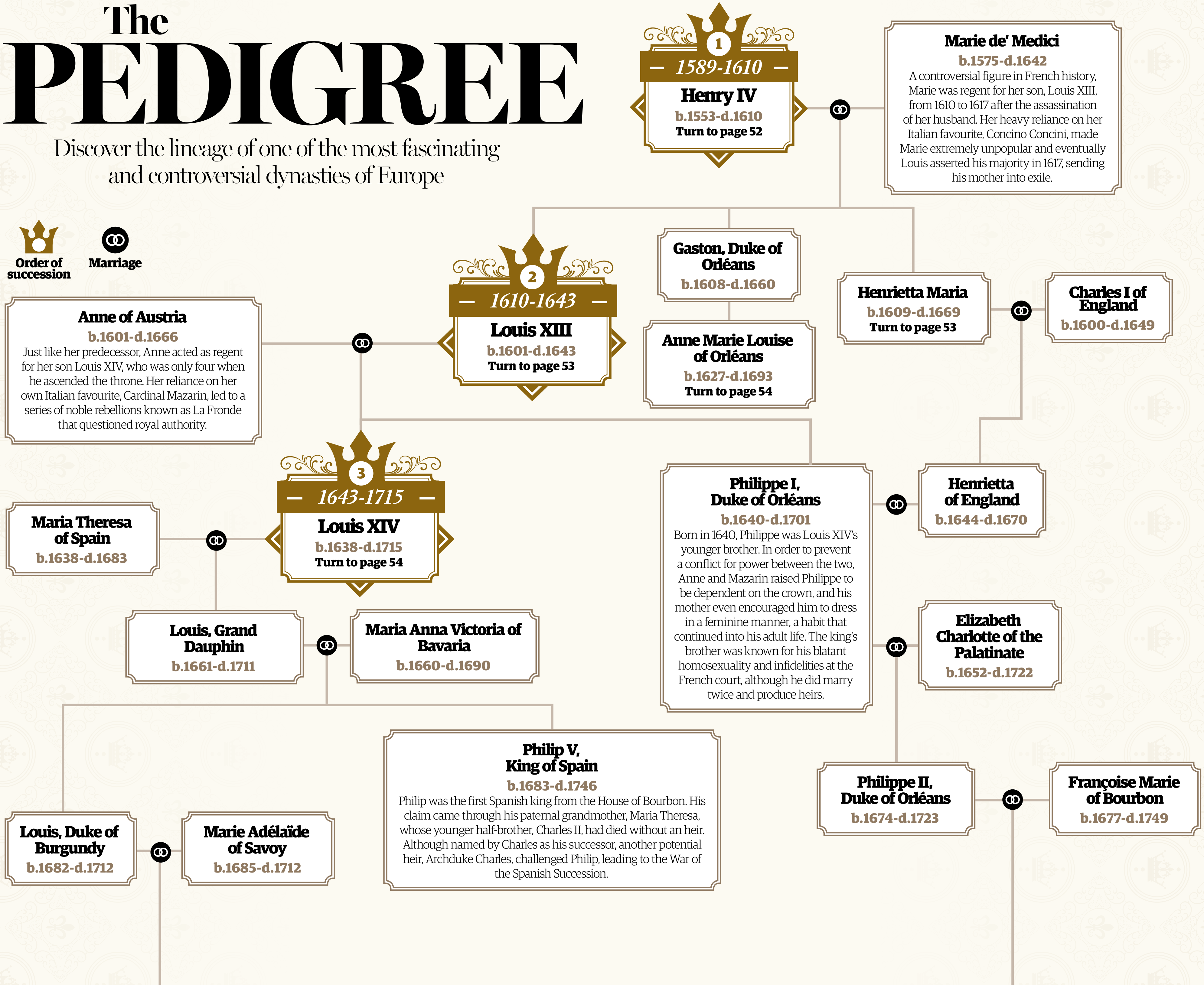
The PEDIGREE

Discover the lineage of one of the most fascinating and controversial dynasties of Europe



Order of succession

Marriage

1 – 1589-1610 –
Henry IV
b.1553-d.1610
Turn to page 52

Marie de' Medici
b.1575-d.1642
A controversial figure in French history, Marie was regent for her son, Louis XIII, from 1610 to 1617 after the assassination of her husband. Her heavy reliance on her Italian favourite, Concino Concini, made Marie extremely unpopular and eventually Louis asserted his majority in 1617, sending his mother into exile.

2 – 1610-1643 –
Louis XIII
b.1601-d.1643
Turn to page 53

Anne of Austria
b.1601-d.1666
Just like her predecessor, Anne acted as regent for her son Louis XIV, who was only four when he ascended the throne. Her reliance on her own Italian favourite, Cardinal Mazarin, led to a series of noble rebellions known as La Fronde that questioned royal authority.

Gaston, Duke of Orléans
b.1608-d.1660

Anne Marie Louise of Orléans
b.1627-d.1693
Turn to page 54

Henrietta Maria
b.1609-d.1669
Turn to page 53

Charles I of England
b.1600-d.1649

3 – 1643-1715 –
Louis XIV
b.1638-d.1715
Turn to page 54

Maria Theresa of Spain
b.1638-d.1683

Philippe I, Duke of Orléans
b.1640-d.1701
Born in 1640, Philippe was Louis XIV's younger brother. In order to prevent a conflict for power between the two, Anne and Mazarin raised Philippe to be dependent on the crown, and his mother even encouraged him to dress in a feminine manner, a habit that continued into his adult life. The king's brother was known for his blatant homosexuality and infidelities at the French court, although he did marry twice and produce heirs.

Henrietta of England
b.1644-d.1670

Elizabeth Charlotte of the Palatinate
b.1652-d.1722

Louis, Grand Dauphin
b.1661-d.1711

Maria Anna Victoria of Bavaria
b.1660-d.1690

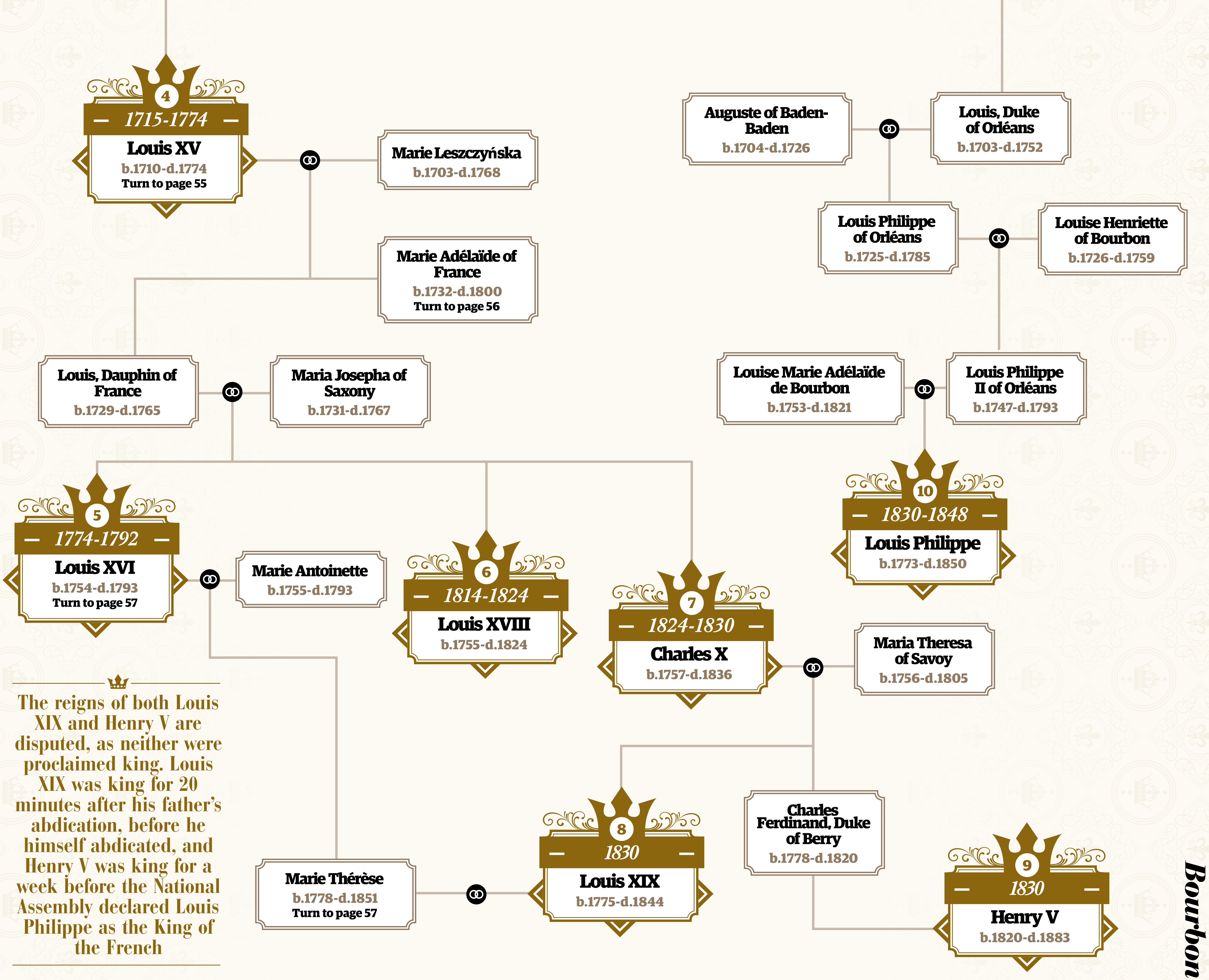
Philip V, King of Spain
b.1683-d.1746
Philip was the first Spanish king from the House of Bourbon. His claim came through his paternal grandmother, Maria Theresa, whose younger half-brother, Charles II, had died without an heir. Although named by Charles as his successor, another potential heir, Archduke Charles, challenged Philip, leading to the War of the Spanish Succession.

Louis, Duke of Burgundy
b.1682-d.1712

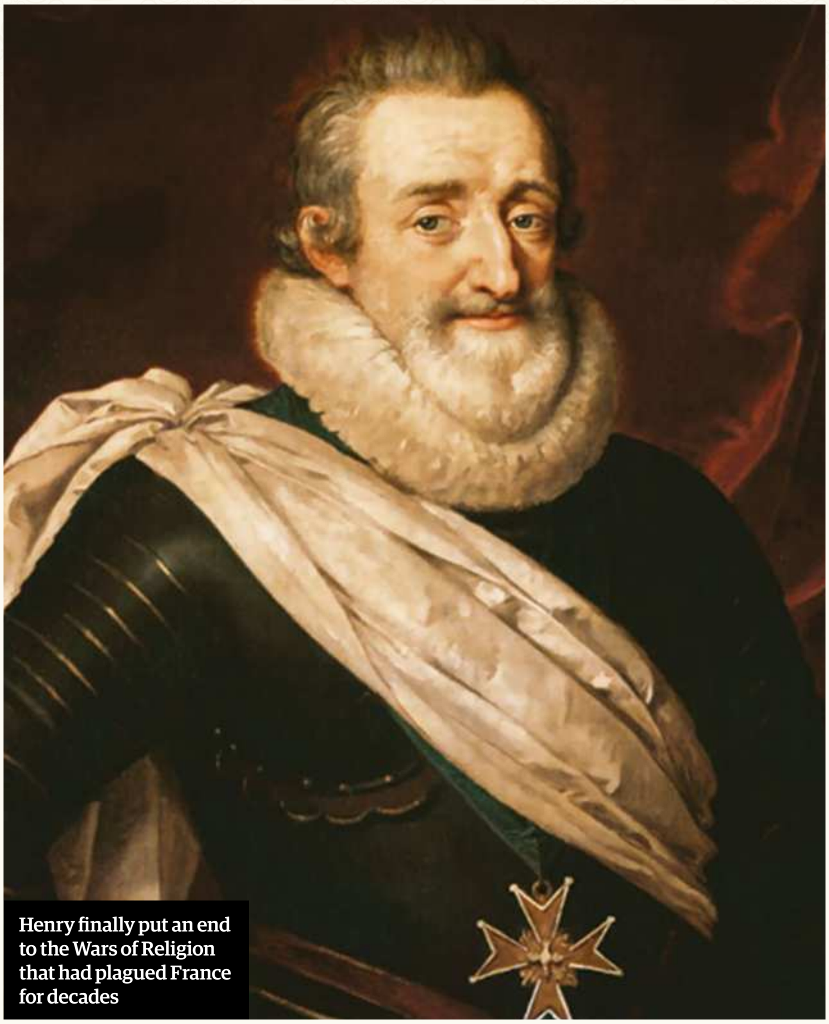
Marie Adélaïde of Savoy
b.1685-d.1712

Philippe II, Duke of Orléans
b.1674-d.1723

Françoise Marie of Bourbon
b.1677-d.1749


4
1715-1774
Louis XV
b.1710-d.1774
Turn to page 55
Marie Leszczyńska
b.1703-d.1768
Marie Adélaïde of France
b.1732-d.1800
Turn to page 56
Louis, Dauphin of France
b.1729-d.1765
Maria Josepha of Saxony
b.1731-d.1767
5
1774-1792
Louis XVI
b.1754-d.1793
Turn to page 57
Marie Antoinette
b.1755-d.1793
6
1814-1824
Louis XVIII
b.1755-d.1824
7
1824-1830
Charles X
b.1757-d.1836
Maria Theresa of Savoy
b.1756-d.1805
Marie Thérèse
b.1778-d.1851
Turn to page 57
8
1830
Louis XIX
b.1775-d.1844
Charles Ferdinand, Duke of Berry
b.1778-d.1820
9
1830
Henry V
b.1820-d.1883
Auguste of Baden-Baden
b.1704-d.1726
Louis, Duke of Orléans
b.1703-d.1752
Louis Philippe of Orléans
b.1725-d.1785
Louise Henriette of Bourbon
b.1726-d.1759
Louise Marie Adélaïde de Bourbon
b.1753-d.1821
Louis Philippe II of Orléans
b.1747-d.1793
10
1830-1848
Louis Philippe
b.1773-d.1850

The reigns of both Louis XIX and Henry V are disputed, as neither were proclaimed king. Louis XIX was king for 20 minutes after his father's abdication, before he himself abdicated, and Henry V was king for a week before the National Assembly declared Louis Philippe as the King of the French



Henry finally put an end to the Wars of Religion that had plagued France for decades

Henry IV

b.1553-d.1610 ♛ 1589-1610

Trailblazer for religious tolerance

For many in France, Henry IV was a usurper. The son of Jeanne III of Navarre and her husband, Antoine of Bourbon, Henry was already the king of Navarre when it became clear that he was the next in line for the French throne. Salic Law in France demanded that only a male descendant could rule and Henry was the legitimate heir. His predecessor and distant cousin, Henry III, had no surviving children, and upon his assassination in 1589 it was time for the Navarrese monarch to assume his rightful place. There was just one glaring issue: Henry was a Protestant.

France was Roman Catholic, and a number of leading nobles were outraged that a Protestant held the royal seat of power. Henry had already experienced the bloody conflict that religion had brought to France back in 1572 when he arrived in Paris to marry Margaret of Valois, daughter of Henry II and Catherine de' Medici. The marriage was supposed to symbolise peace between the two denominations – but disaster struck just four days later. Thousands of Protestants, who had arrived in Paris for the wedding, were slaughtered in a bloodbath that triggered carnage throughout the country. Known as the Saint Bartholomew's Day Massacre, Henry would have been killed too if it wasn't for his new wife's protection and a false promise to convert to Catholicism. Eventually, the marriage itself proved unhappy and childless and the couple separated before Henry became king.

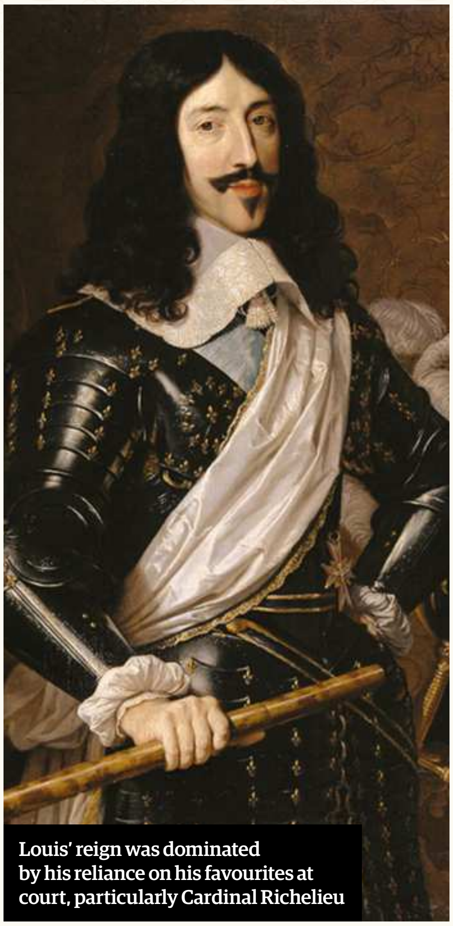
Now it was time for Henry to confront this gory conflict once more. Determined to overthrow the man they deemed a heretic, the nobles formed the Catholic League and threw their support behind Henry's Catholic uncle, Cardinal Charles, as the rightful king. Foreseeing this, Henry III had already previously imprisoned the cardinal to prevent interference with the succession. This did not deter the rebels, though, who sought to release Charles and place him on the throne.

The ensuing civil war caused political chaos and uncertainty in France. The embattled king needed to win to remain on the throne and he was not going down without a fight. The tide appeared to turn in his favour when his uncle passed away in 1590 and the League could not agree on another suitable candidate who was both Catholic and male. He also gained the support of the Parlement of Paris, who believed that upholding Salic Law was more important for the stability of the monarchy than religion. Despite this, Henry struggled to gain control of Paris and was in a stalemate against the League.

By 1593, enough was enough. Henry had fallen in love with a beautiful duchess, Gabrielle d'Estrées, who stood by his side during his battle with the Catholic League. Knowing that Henry's only chance of winning was by renouncing his Protestant faith, Gabrielle convinced him to do so. In July, Henry converted to Catholicism and announced that "Paris was well worth a Mass." In February 1594, he was officially crowned king, five years after he originally ascended the throne. Although it finally ended the civil war that had devastated France for years, many of Henry's subjects knew that his devotion to the Protestant faith had never changed. By increasing religious tolerance for Protestants in France, most notably with the Edict of Nantes, Henry found himself the target of a series of assassination attempts.

Gabrielle almost became queen of France after the king's annulment, to the horror of his advisors, had it not been for her convenient death in 1599. Desperate for an heir to secure the throne, Henry married Marie de' Medici in 1600, producing six children despite the animosity between husband and wife. He died ten years later, murdered by a Catholic fanatic who stabbed him when his coach stopped in traffic. Marie, whose coronation ceremony had only been the day before, became regent for their son, Louis XIII. Following the successes of his reign, Henry is now fondly remembered as 'the Good King Henry' rather than as the usurper that he was originally seen to be.

> "The embattled king needed to win to remain on the throne"


Louis' reign was dominated by his reliance on his favourites at court, particularly Cardinal Richelieu

Louis XIII

b.1601-d.1643 ♛ 1610-1643

A rising power

Louis was the miracle child that France had been waiting for. The country had gone through decades of uncertainty as the previous reigning Valois dynasty had failed to provide healthy male heirs. As a result, Louis' birth in 1601 was met with heavy celebrations and joy - France could breathe freely once again.

Tragedy was to strike early in Louis' life. He was barely nine years old when he became king following his father's assassination. Louis' mother, Marie de' Medici, acted as his regent, but her reign proved destructive when coupled with her reluctance to relinquish control, even after Louis reached his majority in 1614. In 1617, Louis finally removed his mother from power in a coup and exiled her to Blois, executing her favourites at the same time.

Two years earlier, Louis had married the Spanish infanta Anne of Austria, with whom he would eventually have his own miracle son, the future Louis XIV, after 22 years and a number of miscarriages. Two years later, a second son arrived, Philippe, Duke of Anjou, providing a spare for the heir. Despite this, the marriage was not a success, particularly with his mother's domineering presence in the early years.

After Marie's exile, relations between the king and queen improved for a short time, before the rise of Cardinal Richelieu as first minister. Louis' heavy reliance on Richelieu caused further distance between him and Anne, who could not find a place by his side. It was rumoured that the only reason his wife fell pregnant after such a long time was that circumstances forced the king to spend the night in her room.

Of course, family issues were not the only important factor of Louis' reign. A series of victories against the Habsburg Empire precipitated the rise of France as the dominant power in Europe under his son. Unfortunately, he did not live to see France's victory at the Battle of Rocroi against the Spanish as he succumbed to tuberculosis just days before on the 33rd anniversary of his father's death.

Henrietta Maria

b.1609-d.1669

The heretic queen

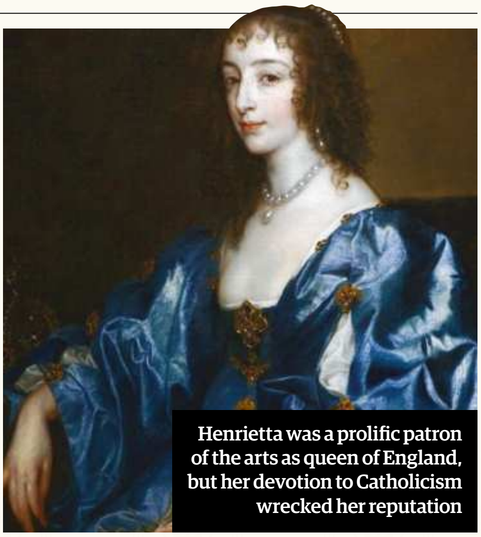
Henrietta Maria is one of the most controversial queens in English history. As a French Catholic, she embodied everything that the Protestant English court had learnt to fear and despise.

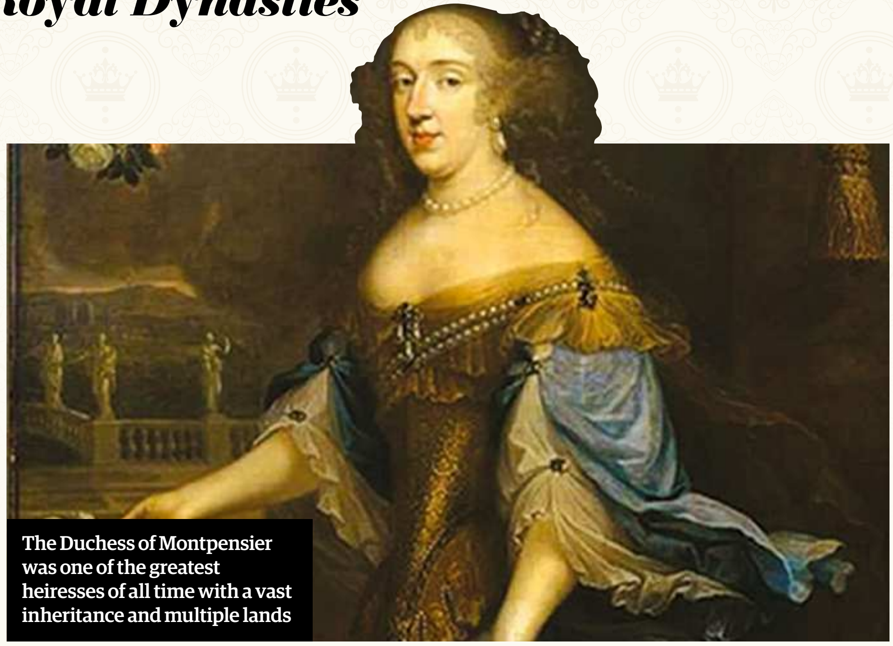
Born in 1609, Henrietta was less than a year old when her father, Henry IV, was assassinated and her mother became the regent of France. Raised in the French court, Henrietta indulged in a range of pursuits including dance and music, although she was not known for her academic intelligence.

In 1625, she married Charles I of England to strengthen an alliance between her new husband and her brother, Louis XIII. At first, the relationship was on course to fail. The queen disliked her new country and preferred to maintain her own French tastes, bringing her massive French retinue to England to accompany her. She continued to spend as lavishly as she had at the French court, despite the fact that her new kingdom's finances were in dire straits.

Frustrated at the distance between himself and the queen, Charles dismissed the majority of Henrietta's French household. Although she was displeased, it finally allowed the couple to build a relationship and they were soon inseparable. They had nine children with five surviving into adulthood, including England's future Charles II, but this did nothing to endear the queen to her new subjects as she continued to refuse to adapt. She introduced French theatre and masques to the English court and provoked the rage of Protestants for encouraging conversion to Catholicism.

Her behaviour has left her in history as a scapegoat for the English Civil War because of growing fears that her heretic ideals would influence the king. The tension that had been brewing between Charles and parliament culminated in the arrest of his enemies in 1642, supposedly spurred on by Henrietta. By 1644, the situation in England was so unstable that the queen fled to her native France, moving to the court of her nephew Louis XIV. It was the last time Henrietta was to see her husband - he was executed by parliament for high treason in 1649, leaving her heartbroken and impoverished. She would return to England in 1660 following the restoration of the English monarchy under her son but would ultimately go back to France five years later suffering from ill health. Henrietta died in France from an accidental overdose of opiates at the age of 59.


Henrietta was a prolific patron of the arts as queen of England, but her devotion to Catholicism wrecked her reputation



The Duchess of Montpensier was one of the greatest heiresses of all time with a vast inheritance and multiple lands

Anne Marie Louise d'Orléans, Duchess of Montpensier

b.1627-d.1693

A scandalous duchess

The Duchess of Montpensier was a woman who was determined to get what she wanted. A cousin of Louis XIV and daughter of his paternal uncle, Gaston, Duke of Orléans, the duchess led a very colourful life. Known as 'La Grande Mademoiselle', she was one of the wealthiest women in France after she inherited the duchy of Montpensier from her mother, Marie de Bourbon, who died giving birth to her.

Determined to enhance her position from a young age, the duchess set her sights on a match with her cousin the king, although Cardinal Mazarin, who did not support the potential marriage, thwarted her plans. She then turned her attention to the Holy Roman emperor, Ferdinand III, but a marriage was unthinkable at a time when the France and the empire were not at peace.

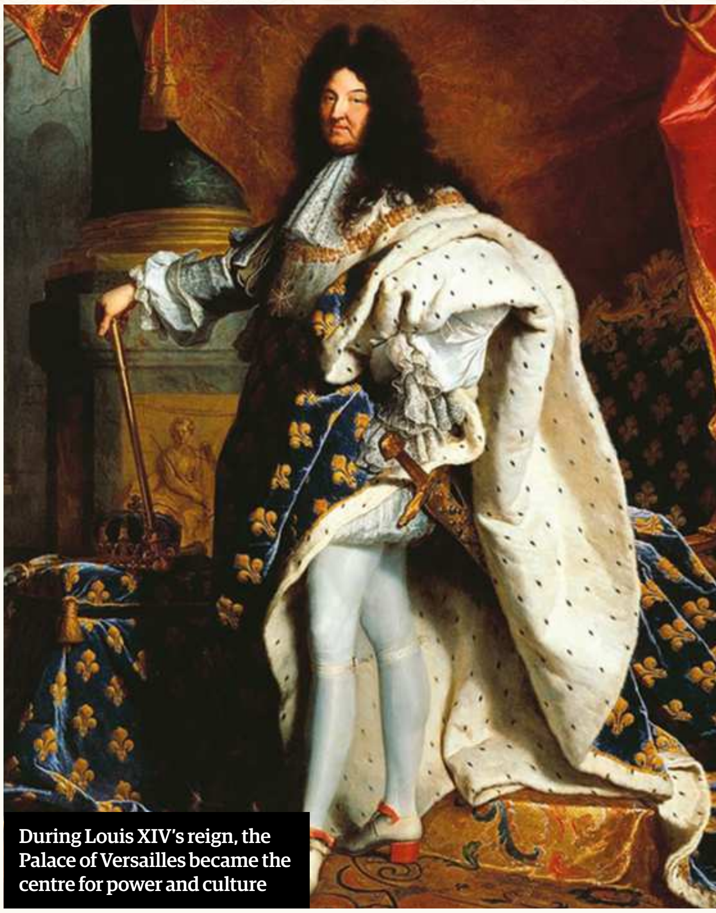
Angered that she had been prevented from achieving what she wanted at every opportunity, she openly sided with her father against Mazarin and ended up exiled from the French court. She became involved with La Fronde, a series of rebellions against the cardinal and the regent, Louis' mother, Anne of Austria.

Anne was even given the distinction as the saviour of the rebel army, which was at the brink of ruin by the third war of La Fronde in 1652. It was the duchess who ordered the rebel army to fire at royal troops, saving the soldiers from an untimely end.

Once again forced into exile after her involvement in the rebellions, Anne did not return to court until 1657. Although the previous proposed marriages had led nowhere, she was still the most eligible heiress in Europe. Louis sought to find a husband for her, but none of them interested her enough. Her return to court was short-lived as a mere five years later she was exiled for a third time for refusing to marry Afonso VI of Portugal, and she remained away from court for a year.

Upon her return, the duchess fell in love with a nobleman, Antoine Nompar de Caumont, duc de Lauzun. In 1670, she asked the king for permission to marry him, causing a scandal since Lauzun ranked far beneath her station. Louis initially consented but reversed his decision three days later following the outrage expressed at court. Anne was devastated. Shortly afterwards, Lauzun was arrested on unknown charges, and in order to secure his freedom, the duchess agreed to give some of her wealthiest lands to the king.

Sadly, although Lauzun was free, the couple could not reunite as his freedom was granted on the condition that he remained in exile. Anne died in Paris in 1693, refusing one last visit from the love of her life out of pride.



During Louis XIV's reign, the Palace of Versailles became the centre for power and culture

Louis XIV

b.1638-d.1715 ♛ 1643-1715

The Sun King

Charismatic, controlling and lustful, Louis XIV was the epitome of the autocratic ruler. He succeeded his father, Louis XIII, at the tender age of four. As a minor, his mother, Anne of Austria, acted as his regent alongside her chief minister, Cardinal Mazarin. Unrest among the nobility against royal power and authority had been bubbling away for a number of years, and during the regency, it finally exploded. A series of rebellions known as La Fronde against Louis but aimed at his regent and her ambitious advisor, caused chaos in France. Although the rebels were eventually defeated, the hectic experience permanently scarred the young king and fuelled his hatred for the city of Paris.

Determined that he would never witness such blatant disregard for his authority ever again, Louis established an absolutist monarchy that consolidated his divine right to rule. He created the glamorous and extravagant Palace of Versailles, relocating his entire court there. At Versailles, the court had to revolve around the king, his activities and schedule as if he were the sun, the centre of the universe. Louis formalised strict etiquette that the court had to follow if they wished to remain there, most notably through the 'levée' ceremony. The levée, when Louis woke in the morning, represented the rising of the sun and the nobility was invited to watch – those of the highest rank even participated in helping the king dress. It was the same when Louis went to bed, symbolising the sun going down, in a ceremony was called the 'coucher'.

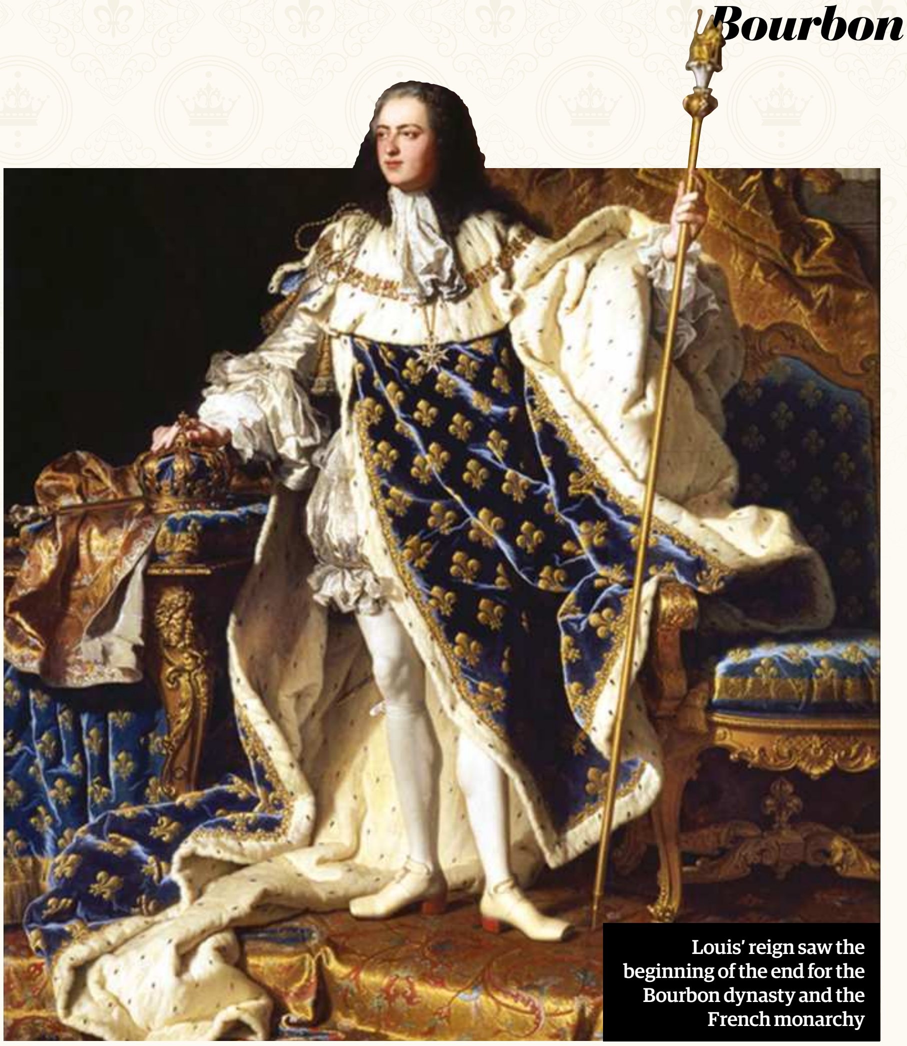
The opportunity to have such close and intimate contact with the monarch had the nobles clambering over themselves to win favour with Louis, leaving them with little time to plot against him. Besides controlling his courtiers like puppets, the king also found time to amuse himself with a bevy of beautiful women, cementing his reputation as a womaniser before Casanova was even born. Some of his most famous mistresses included Louise de La Valliére and the Marquise de Montespan. Louis had over a dozen illegitimate children, but through his wife, Maria Theresa of Spain, he had six legitimate children of which only his eldest son Louis, le Grand Dauphin, survived into childhood.

Louis' reign is well remembered for a number of military campaigns that saw France rise as Europe's leading power. The Wars of Devolution, the League of Augsburg and the Spanish Succession were the biggest conflicts that occurred during his time as king and all revolved around his desire to increase France's scope and position on the continent. Louis' achievements began to diminish in the later years of his reign, particularly after he issued the Edict of Fontainebleau in 1685, permitting the persecution of the Huguenots. This revoked the Edict of Nantes created during his grandfather Henry IV's reign and led to a number of Protestants leaving the country, including a number of skilled workers who took their knowledge and experience with them.

> "At Versailles, the court had to revolve around the king"

Louis' actions had been greatly encouraged by Madame de Maintenon, his second wife, who he married in secret after the queen's death in 1683. She was not publicly acknowledged as the king's spouse, but she had a profound influence on him nonetheless. A devout Roman Catholic, she saw the Huguenots as heretics and did not believe in religious tolerance. Maintenon is well remembered for her piety and how this affected Louis towards the end of his life. The king, perhaps regretful about the vanity of his early years, increasingly sought religious comfort and appeared to remain faithful to his wife.

After ruling France for over 72 years and plagued with illness towards the end, Louis died of gangrene in 1715. He had lived for so long that he had outlived both his son and grandson, leaving his great-grandson to succeed him as Louis XV.



Louis' reign saw the beginning of the end for the Bourbon dynasty and the French monarchy

Louis XV

b.1710-d.1774 ♛ 1715-1774

France's womaniser

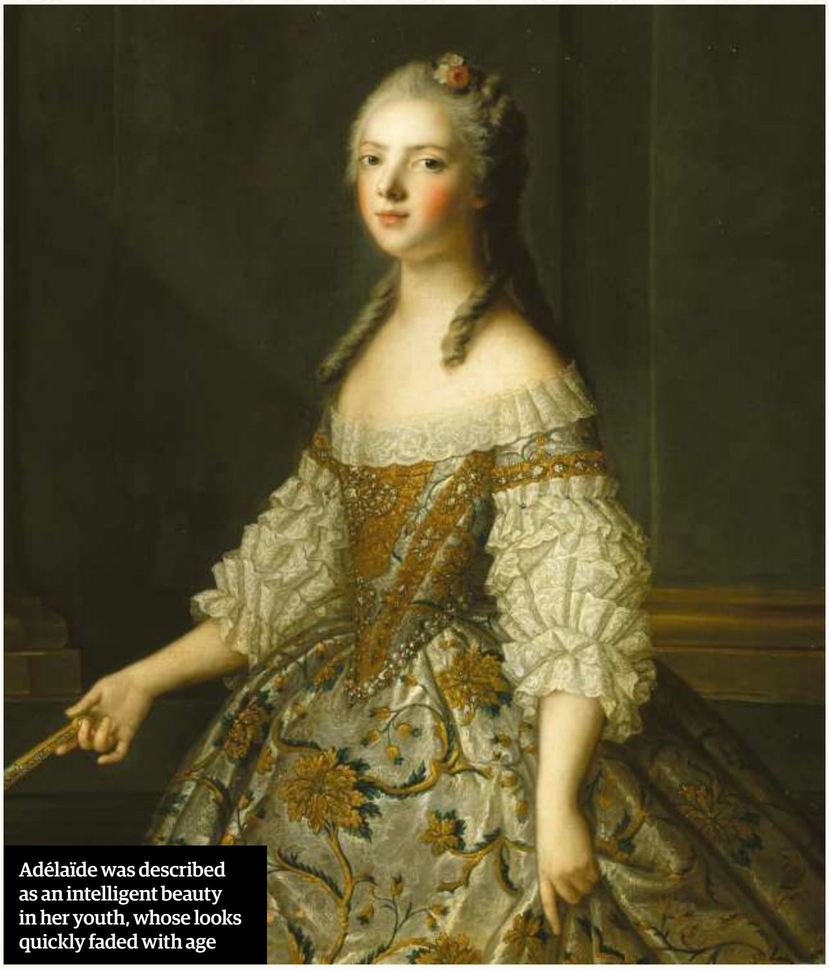
Louis squandered the prestige and power that his great-grandfather and predecessor, Louis XIV, spent his entire reign cultivating for France. The death of his father and grandfather meant that he was only five years old when he became king and his great uncle, Philippe II, Duke of Orléans, acted as his regent until he turned 13.

Louis' bride, Marie Leszczyńska, was an unusual choice for a king of France. The daughter of a deposed Polish monarch, Marie was chosen in the hope that she could provide Louis with a number of heirs, preferably male. Louis was by now 15 years old and, after experiencing bouts of ill health, he needed to produce an heir as quickly as possible. The couple married in 1725 and had a total of ten children, two boys and eight girls.

Louis' constant womanising put him in conflict with his family and severely damaged his reputation. His children resented the fact that their mother was being humiliated in front of the French court, and the court likewise did not appreciate a king who was so open with his affections. His mistresses in turn wielded considerable influence over him, the most famous of whom were Madame de Pompadour and later Madame du Barry.

The king took little interest in the running of government, and attempts by his ministers to introduce reform failed. Decades of warfare had severely weakened France, both financially and politically. Louis lost a lot of the land that had been gained through various military campaigns, particularly its colonies, which further damaged the country's position in Europe and caused a lot of resentment towards not only the king but also the system of absolute monarchy itself.

The disasters of Louis' reign left his grandson and successor, Louis XVI, with a fragile legacy that eventually contributed to the downfall of the Bourbon dynasty and the monarchy of France.



Adélaïde was described as an intelligent beauty in her youth, whose looks quickly faded with age

Princess Marie Adélaïde of France

b.1732-d.1800

The princess who spoke her mind

Princess Marie Adélaïde of France, often referred to as Madame Adélaïde, was a force to be reckoned with in the French court. Born in 1732, she was the fourth daughter of Louis XV and Marie Leszczyńska. Her father's favourite daughter, Adélaïde stayed close to him and spent more time with him than the rest of his children. In fact, the close relationship between father and daughter led to the rise of slanderous gossip that their love was incestuous and had even produced an illegitimate son. As salacious as these rumours were, there was no substance to them. They were more likely the product of jealous courtiers, who could not access the king on the same intimate level that they had with his great-grandfather and wished to insult the person he kept near.

According to Madame Campan, reader to Adélaïde and her sisters and later the lady-in-waiting of Marie Antoinette, the princess had a "thirst for knowledge" and a love for musical instruments. The king would often come to visit his daughter in the morning with coffee that he had made himself and Adélaïde would then ring a bell that would set off a chain reaction notifying all of his daughters that their father was visiting. It was Adélaïde who was graced with his presence the longest while his youngest daughter, Princess Louise, would run from her own apartments just in time to receive his embrace before he disappeared for the day. Louis' daughters, eight in total, were collectively known as the 'Mesdames' at the Palace of Versailles.

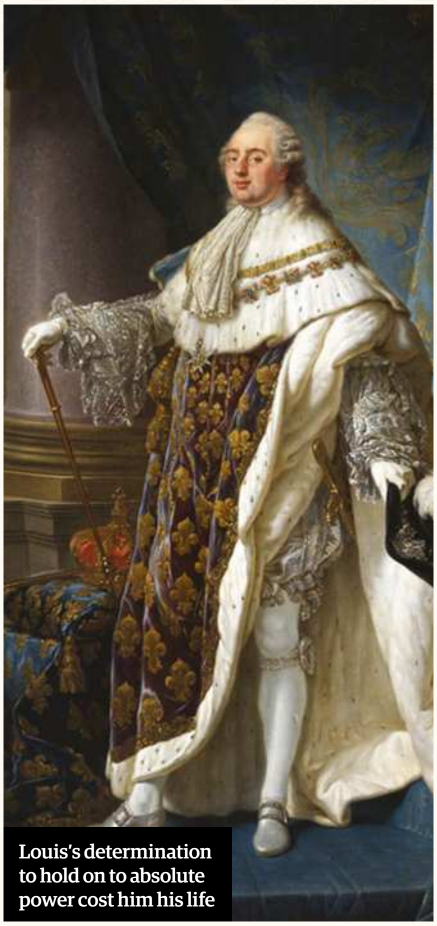
Louise-Elisabeth, the eldest daughter, was the only one of the princesses to marry. The political climate at the time prevented Adélaïde and her sisters from seeking suitable husbands, which resulted in their permanent residence at Versailles. Out of all the daughters, as cunning as they were, it was Adélaïde who was by far the most domineering. She was particularly close to her brother, the Dauphin Louis, and attempted to gain political influence through him and their father. Although unsuccessful, the princess found other ways to become outspoken.

Along with her siblings, Adélaïde openly scorned her father's various mistresses at Versailles, despite her closeness with him. She hated the humiliation that her beloved mother had to endure as the king paraded his lovers around the court and made her feelings well known. She found herself at loggerheads with her father's favourite mistress, Madame de Pompadour, who favoured an alliance with Austria while Adélaïde was strongly opposed to it. She would publicly insult Madame de Pompadour and give her offensive nicknames. Louis' favourite quickly realised that it was best to avoid the shrewd princess.

However it was the king's last mistress, Madame du Barry, who had to bear the princess's anger the most. To Adélaïde, it was du Barry who presented a real threat to her own position in court. When her nephew, who succeeded as the dauphin following Louis' death, married Marie Antoinette, Adélaïde sought to manipulate her new niece against du Barry. She convinced the dauphine, who was only 14 years old, to publicly refuse acknowledgment of du Barry's presence. The young Marie was convinced to partake when Adélaïde and her siblings crudely explained that du Barry was simply at court to provide the king with 'pleasure'. Horrified, Marie Antoinette readily agreed and ignored Madame du Barry, offending the king. Marie Antoinette's mother eventually forced her to reconcile with du Barry to the anger of Adélaïde.

Adélaïde would be the first to coin Marie Antoinette's hateful nickname 'the Austrian', which would tar the young dauphine for the rest of her life. Adélaïde continued to live at Versailles with her sisters during the reign of their nephew Louis XVI and exerted the political influence over him that she had not been able to achieve previously. Following the outbreak of the French Revolution, Adélaïde and her last remaining sister, Victoire, fled to Italy, escaping the terror that would massacre their family. Adélaïde would die in Trieste in 1800, one year after her sister, and the last of Louis XV's children.

> "She hated the humiliation that her beloved mother had to endure"


Louis's determination to hold on to absolute power cost him his life

Louis XVI

b.1754-d.1793 ♛ 1774-1792

A king who lost his head

If there was ever a monarch who was unprepared to rule, it was Louis XVI. After his elder brother's sudden death in 1761, he became heir to the French throne and, a mere four years later, his father, the Dauphin, also passed away. He was now next in line to the throne.

Louis' education did nothing to teach him how to deal with government. He was already under scrutiny as he had failed to consummate his marriage to Marie Antoinette, who he had married in 1770, which left lingering questions on whether they would be able to provide an heir. It was not until 1777 that the queen finally fell pregnant.

The young king wished to rule as an absolute monarch but denied his courtiers the the intimate access with which he could keep control. The country continued to fall into a state of financial disrepair and starvation was rife, yet the royals continued to spend lavishly.

France needed urgent change and finance minister Jacques Necker persuaded Louis to summon the Estates-General. Made up of the clergy, nobles and commoners, it demanded action and, realising that this could threaten his authority, Louis dismissed them. However, their anger grew when suspicions arose that the king was planning to suppress them. The Third Estate decided to do the unthinkable and formed the National Assembly, a new body determined to represent the people. Louis responded by sending his troops to Paris, only managing to provoke more fear and rebellion.

Louis fired Necker, blaming him for the growing unrest. For Parisians, this was the last straw. The Bastille prison, a symbol of the 'Ancien Régime', was stormed on 14 July 1789 and the royal family were imprisoned. Two years later, Louis was forced to accept a constitutional monarchy, but this wasn't enough. The monarchy was abolished completely in September 1792.

Four months later, the king was guillotined for treason and Marie Antoinette would only survive another nine months before she was also executed. The revolution had completely taken hold.

Marie Thérèse of France

b.1778-d.1851

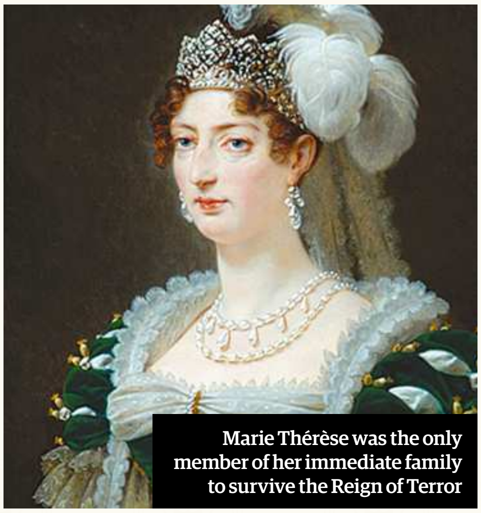
The 20-minute queen

Surviving the terror that claimed her family's lives, Marie Thérèse of France carried the violent unrest and tragedy with her for the rest of her life. Born in 1778 in such a traumatic way that her father banned the practice of public viewing when the queen was in labour, she was the eldest child of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette. Marie was close with her father, who was known to have been attentive towards her and her siblings.

Along with her family, she was imprisoned in 1792 during the Revolution, sharing a room with her mother, aunt and brother. One by one they were dragged away – first her mother and aunt, then her brother. Marie was alone. Unbeknown to her, that was the last time she would see her family. Her mother and aunt were guillotined while the brother she adored, who was just a young boy, died in prison, most likely as a result of neglect and disease. It would be two years before Marie would discover their fates, and when she learnt the truth she collapsed and wept over and over again.

The only member of her family to survive the Reign of Terror, Marie was eventually released in 1795 in exchange for a group of captured Protestants at the age of 17, having been in captivity for three years. She was first sent to Austria before settling in what is now modern-day Latvia, where her uncle Louis was living in exile. Wishing to see her married, Louis arranged her betrothal to her first cousin, the Duke of Angoulême, in 1799. They appeared to have been happy, but they produced no children.

When Napoleon was defeated in 1814, the Bourbon dynasty was restored to the throne and Marie's uncle became Louis XVIII. After a brief return in which he usurped her uncle, Napoleon was once again defeated in 1815. Louis XVIII was once again the king of France – Marie's brother had been nominally recognised as Louis XVII, even though he was imprisoned. When her uncle failed to produce an heir, the French crown passed to Marie's other uncle and father-in-law, Charles X. Upon his succession, his son, Marie's husband, became the new dauphin of France.


Marie Thérèse was the only member of her immediate family to survive the Reign of Terror

In 1830, Charles was overthrown in the July Revolution and abdicated in favour of his son the duke, who in turn was forced to sign the same abdication document 20 minutes later. Marie was therefore, for 20 minutes, the queen. They moved into exile where Marie eventually died in 1851. She recorded her experiences as a prisoner during the Revolution that was later published as *The Ruin Of A Princess*.

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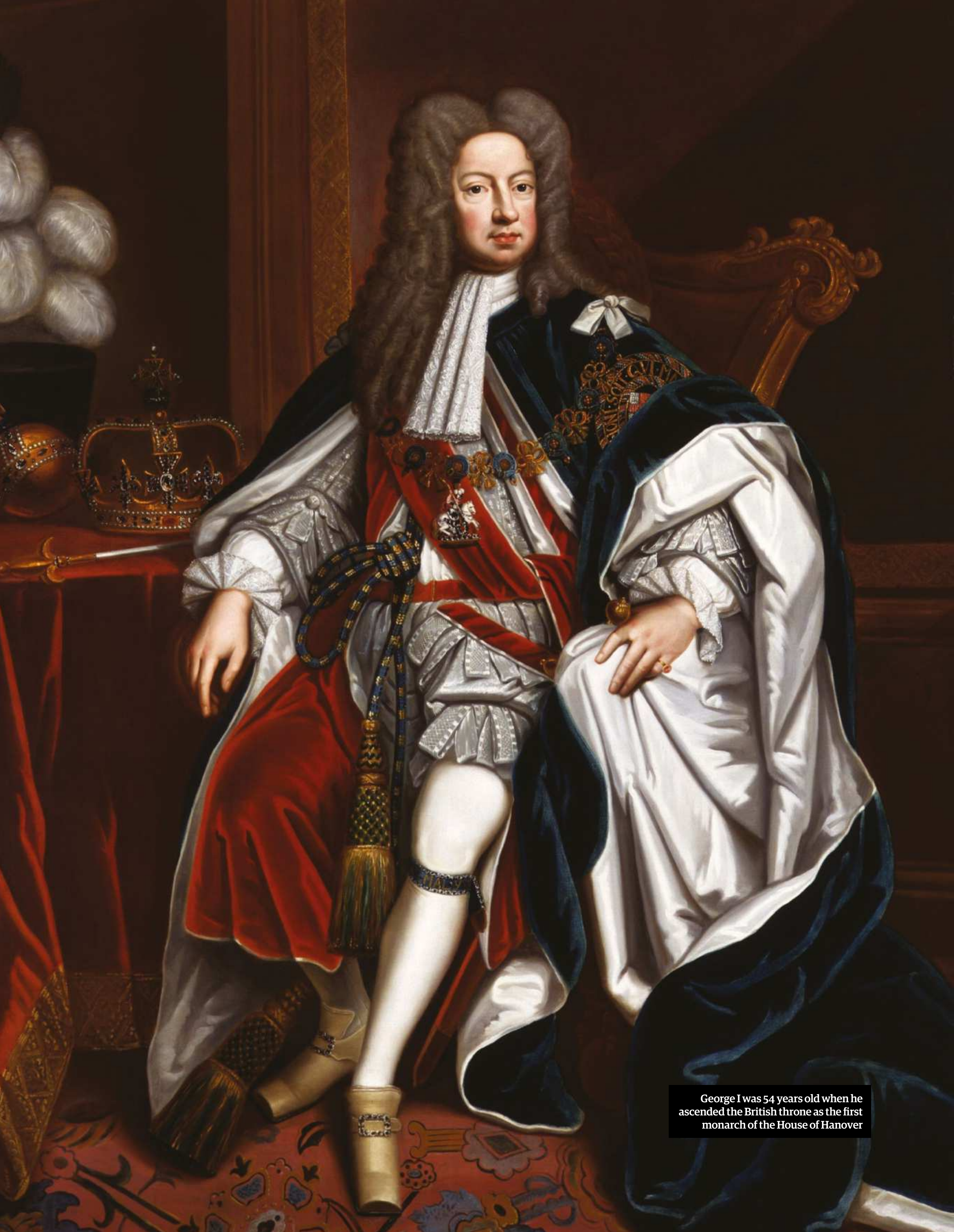
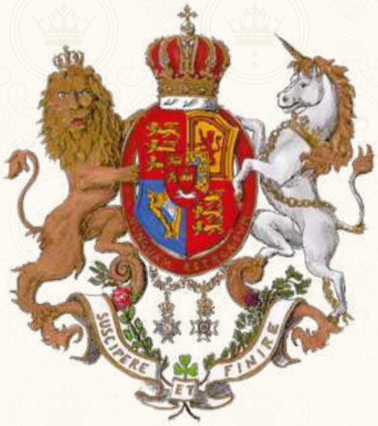


George I was 54 years old when he ascended the British throne as the first monarch of the House of Hanover



HANOVER

1714-1901

Hailing from Germany and not necessarily the popular choice for a monarchy, the House of Hanover loved nothing more than a good family fight

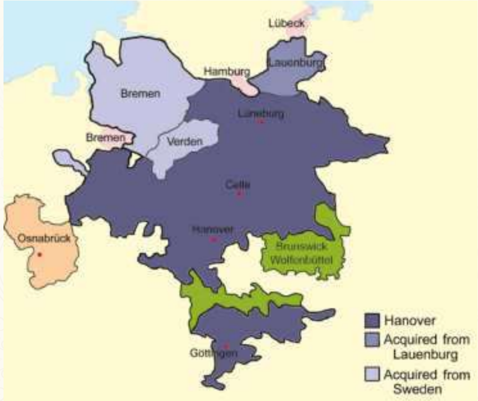
Words KATHARINE MARSH & CATHERINE CURZON

Religious upheaval was nothing new in England by the early 1700s; years of to-ing and fro-ing between Roman Catholicism and the Church of England had left deep divisions.

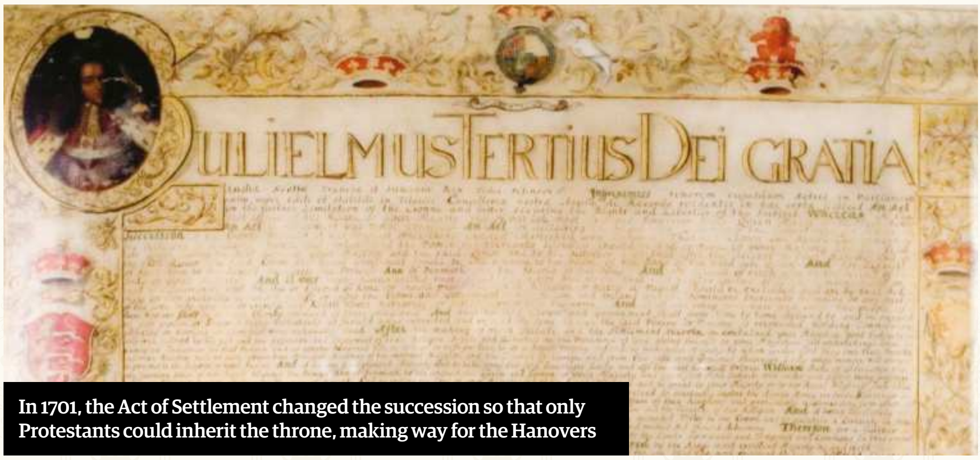
In 1701, it was decided: from that point on, Catholics would be excluded from the line of succession, leaving the throne open only to Protestant royals. When Queen Anne died in 1714, she had no surviving children, let alone Protestant ones, and so the next Protestant in the line of succession was called upon to become king of Great Britain. It was the end of the House of Stuart, and the start of the reign of the Hanoverians.

While the men of the Hanover line had ruled an area in Germany during the 1600s - some of them even rising to become a prince-elector in the Holy Roman Empire - the Kingdom of Great Britain was now added to their territory in a personal rule, and it would signal the start of England's Georgian era. This was an interesting time for British politics and society, with the introduction of prime ministers, the Enlightenment and the loss of America as it fought for independence. There was certainly no shortage of scandal during this era either, with mistresses aplenty, allegations of incest and madness, and whispers of murder.

Six members of the House of Hanover ruled Great Britain and Ireland, beginning with the four Georges, supposedly of increased insanity as time went on. Next was William IV, whose lack of surviving legitimate children (for he had plenty of illegitimate offspring) almost caused a succession crisis. It was a result of this that his niece took the crown in 1837 and wore it as Queen Victoria until her death in 1901. Due to her marriage to Prince Albert, this would be the end of Hanoverian rule; the children of this celebrated union belonged to the House of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, later to be renamed as the House of Windsor. But thanks to the matches she made for her children, Queen Victoria managed to spread her family all over Europe, leaving Hanover blood in every royal corner of the continent.



The areas of Germany ruled by the Hanovers



GULIELMUS TERTIUS DEI GRATIA

In 1701, the Act of Settlement changed the succession so that only Protestants could inherit the throne, making way for the Hanovers

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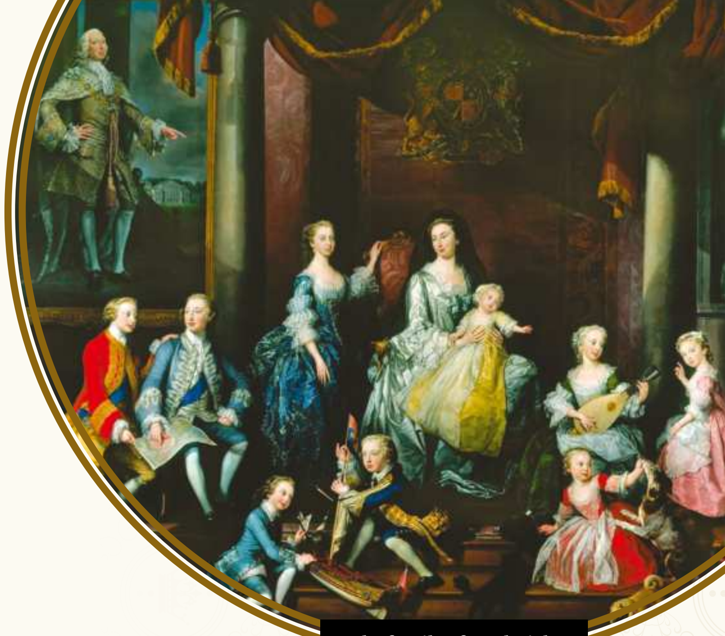
Coat of arms © Theo van der Zalm license CC BY-SA 3.0

The PEDIGREE

Uncover the scandalous lineage of the House of Hanover

Order of succession

Marriage


The family of Frederick, Prince of Wales, as painted by George Knapton in 1751

1 – 1714-1727 –
George I
b.1660-d.1727
Turn to page 62

⚭

Sophia Dorothea of Celle
b.1666-d.1726
Turn to page 62

2 – 1727-1760 –
George II
b.1683-d.1760
Turn to page 63

⚭

Caroline of Ansbach
b.1683-d.1737
Turn to page 64

Sophia Dorothea of Hanover
b.1687-d.1757

⚭

Frederick William I of Prussia
b.1688-d.1740

Augusta of Saxe-Gotha
b.1719-d.1772

⚭

Frederick, Prince of Wales
b.1707-d.1751
In 1714, at just seven years old, Frederick was separated from his parents and appointed as ceremonial Head of the House of Hanover, as the rest of his family departed for England. He lived life to the full, plunging headfirst into life as George I's favourite grandchild.

Anne
b.1709-d.1759

⚭

William IV of Orange
b.1711-d.1751

William Duke of Cumberland
b.1721-d.1765
Turn to page 64

Mary
b.1723-d.1772

⚭

Frederick II of Hesse-Kassel
b.1720-d.1785

Frederick V of Denmark
b.1723-d.1766

⚭

Louise
b.1724-d.1751
Married to the womanising King Frederick V, Louise was crowned Queen of Denmark and Norway in 1746. Against all the odds, their arranged marriage was a happy one and the good-natured and sometimes long-suffering Louise was hugely popular in her adopted land.

Augusta
b.1737-d.1813

Charles William of Brunswick
b.1735-d.1806

Edward, Duke of York
b.1739-d.1767

William Henry, Duke of Gloucester
b.1743-d.1805

Caroline Matilda
b.1751-d.1775
As Caroline Matilda's husband, Christian VII of Denmark, descended into madness, she found solace in the arms of his ambitious doctor, Struensee. The couple ruled Denmark as virtual regents but when their affair was discovered, Caroline was imprisoned and Struensee executed, putting an end to their romance.

Christian VII of Denmark
b.1749-d.1808

3
1760-1820
George III
b.1738-d.1820
Turn to page 65

Henry, Duke of Cumberland
b.1745-d.1790

Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz
b.1744-d.1818

Augustus, Duke of Sussex
b.1773-d.1843

Adolphus, Duke of Cambridge
b.1774-d.1850

Amelia
b.1783-d.1810
The short-lived Princess Amelia fell head over heels in love with Charles FitzRoy, an equerry old enough to be her father. Although the couple were desperate to marry, they never received permission and to her dying day, Amelia styled herself as AFR - Mrs Amelia Fitzroy.

Caroline of Brunswick
b.1768-d.1821
Turn to page 67

4
1820-1830
George IV
b.1762-d.1830
Turn to page 66

5
1830-1837
William IV
b.1765-d.1837
William never expected to be king but, when George IV died with no living heir, the crown came to him. He abandoned his lover of 20 years, Dorothea Jordan, and their ten children and married Adelaide of Saxe-Meiningen, who was regarded as a more 'fitting' queen.

Adelaide of Saxe-Meiningen
b.1792-d.1849

Ernest Augustus, King of Hanover
b.1771-d.1851
With female succession forbidden, when Victoria ascended the throne in 1837, it was left to the Duke of Cumberland to take the Hanoverian crown. Established by the Congress of Vienna in 1814, the kingdom ended in 1866 with Prussia's annexation of Hanover.

Edward, Duke of Kent
b.1767-d.1820
Without Prince Edward, there would be no Queen Victoria, no Victorians and a very different United Kingdom! Married to Victoria of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld, he fathered the little girl who would rule as the Victoria Regina.

Victoria of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld
b.1786-d.1861

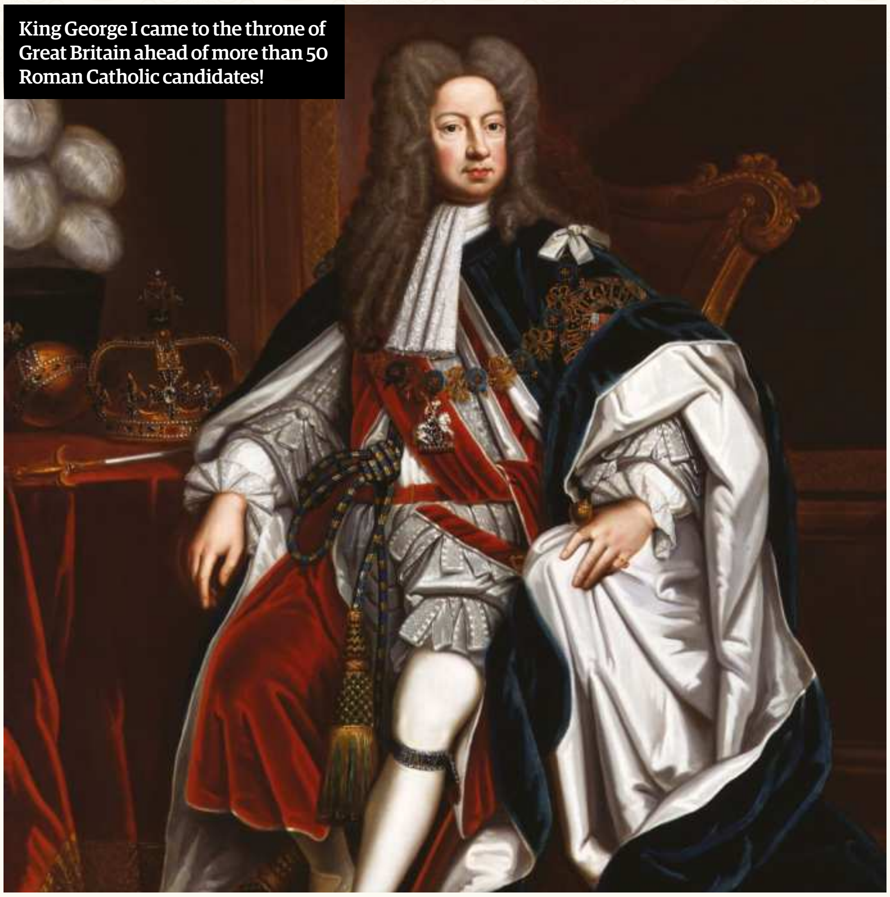
Frederick, Duke of York
b.1763-d.1827

Charlotte
b.1796-d.1817
Turn to page 67

Leopold of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld
b.1790-d.1865

Albert of Saxe-Coburg & Gotha
b.1819-d.1861

6
1837-1901
Victoria
b.1819-d.1901



King George I came to the throne of Great Britain ahead of more than 50 Roman Catholic candidates!

George I

b.1660-d.1727 ♛ 1714-1727

The pig snout

George I had a quirk of fate to thank for his place on the British throne. Born in Hanover and once married to the ill-fated Sophia Dorothea of Celle, George was already Elector of Hanover when the Act of Settlement was passed in 1701.

This Act forbade Catholics from succeeding to the throne of Great Britain and decreed that the crown would pass, instead, to the nearest Protestant heir. This meant that the line of succession was forever altered, bypassing over 50 Roman Catholics who could lay claim to the throne in favour of Dowager Electress Sophia of Hanover, George's mother.

In fact, Sophia died just months before Queen Anne also passed away and George, Elector of Hanover, was named King of Great Britain. He arrived in England with his favourite mistress on his arm, barely able to speak English and already a man with a bad temper and grumpy countenance. An ongoing feud with his son, George Augustus (later George II), did little to help matters and when George I banished his son from court and claimed custody of George Augustus' children, things went from bad to worse.

George I was not popular with his subjects and presided over the financially catastrophic South Sea Bubble, as well as the Jacobite rebellions in which those loyal to the House of Stuart attempted to recapture the throne. It was under his rule that the famed Robert Walpole rose to power and the King was seen as a man who favoured cronyism, lavishing rich rewards and impressive titles on his favourites.

Although he was King of Great Britain, George retained a love for his ancestral home and often returned to Hanover, much to the annoyance of his British subjects. He died in Hanover in 1727 and was laid to rest in the Chapel of the Leineschloss. When bombing raids destroyed the palace during World War II, George I was reburied at Herrenhausen, where he remains.

Sophia Dorothea of Celle

b.1666-d.1726

The princess in the tower

If it were not for a forbidden romance, a scheming courtier and an abiding murder mystery, Great Britain's history might have looked very different. For, as George I stepped off the boat from Hanover and rode triumphant into London to assume his new throne with his mistress at his side, his former wife was locked away. She had been in captivity for 20 years and would remain a prisoner until her lonely death more than a decade later.

From the very beginning, Sophia Dorothea had not wanted to marry her cousin George, the man she called "the pig snout." She was beautiful, wealthy and one of the most eligible women in Europe, but the choice of husband was not hers to make. Forced into the union by her ambitious father, Sophia Dorothea's marriage was a devastatingly unhappy one, even though it produced two children. George took mistresses openly while ignoring his lonely wife and, when she challenged him on his mischievous behaviour, Sophia Dorothea was throttled by her husband.

Eventually, and in desperation, the unhappy princess began a passionate affair with Count Philip Christoph von Königsmarck, a dashing adventurer she had known since childhood. Communicating through secret signals and clandestine notes, von Königsmarck and Sophia Dorothea thought that their romance was invisible; they could not have been more mistaken. Unable to bear life at Hanover, Sophia Dorothea begged her lover to help her escape and together the couple hatched a plan to elope, leaving husbands and courtiers far behind. Yet they had reckoned with the scheming and jealous Countess Clara von Platen, who wanted the handsome count for herself.

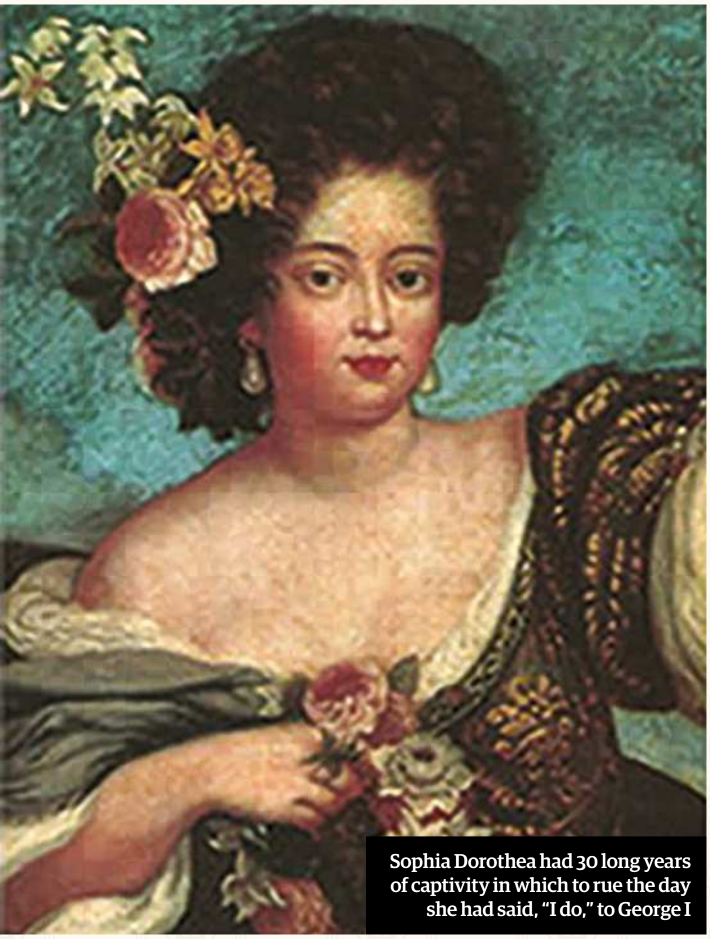
As Philip left his lover one summer night in 1694, he disappeared, never to be never seen again. To this day, his fate remains a mystery but his disappearance was attributed to drunken courtiers or soldiers, his corpse concealed beneath the floorboards of the Leineschloss or slung into the raging river. Legend has it that it was the spurned Clara who betrayed the couple to George and his family. Some claim that Clara watched as the count was stabbed and that, as he breathed his last breath, she kicked him hard in the mouth with her dainty slipper.

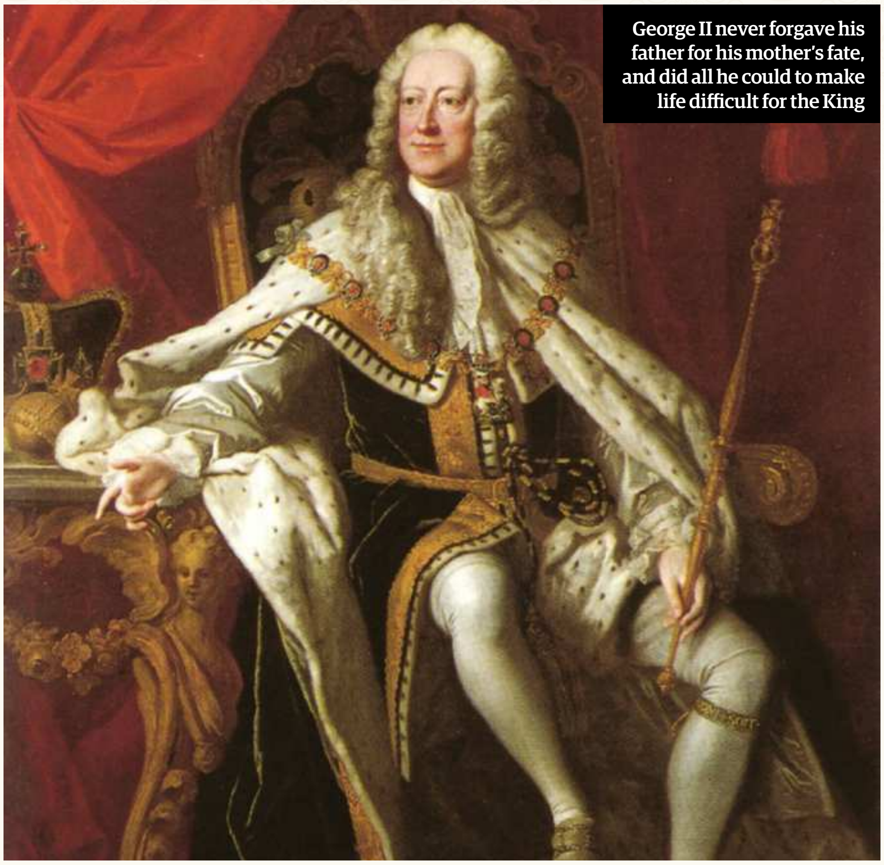
Whether George was involved in the plot against von Königsmarck we do not know, but shortly after he vanished, the King was quick to take action against his wife. On the day after her lover's disappearance, Sophia Dorothea was confined to her rooms and in December 1694, the royal marriage was dissolved. The grounds for the dissolution were that Sophia Dorothea had abandoned

> “She begged her lover to help her escape and together the couple hatched a plan to elope”

her husband, with no mention made of George’s own violent behaviour, nor his open cavorting with his mistresses. Now, free from marriage, Sophia Dorothea would not be allowed to escape. Still only in her mid-20s, she was taken to Ahlden House and there imprisoned for the rest of her life. Under constant guard and watch, her comfortable home might not have been a bare cell, but it was no less a prison.

Sophia Dorothea never saw either of her children again and her father, disgusted at her conduct, did not join her mother when she visited. Sophia Dorothea’s son, later to be George II, never forgave his father for this forced, unforgiving separation from his mother and the wedge it drove between them remained until George I died. Sophia Dorothea never left her gilded cage and died at Ahlden House after three decades of confinement, never seeing the British shores where she might, under different circumstances, have been queen.


Sophia Dorothea had 30 long years of captivity in which to rue the day she had said, “I do,” to George I


George II never forgave his father for his mother’s fate, and did all he could to make life difficult for the King

George II

b.1683-d.1760 ♛ 1727-1760

A son at war

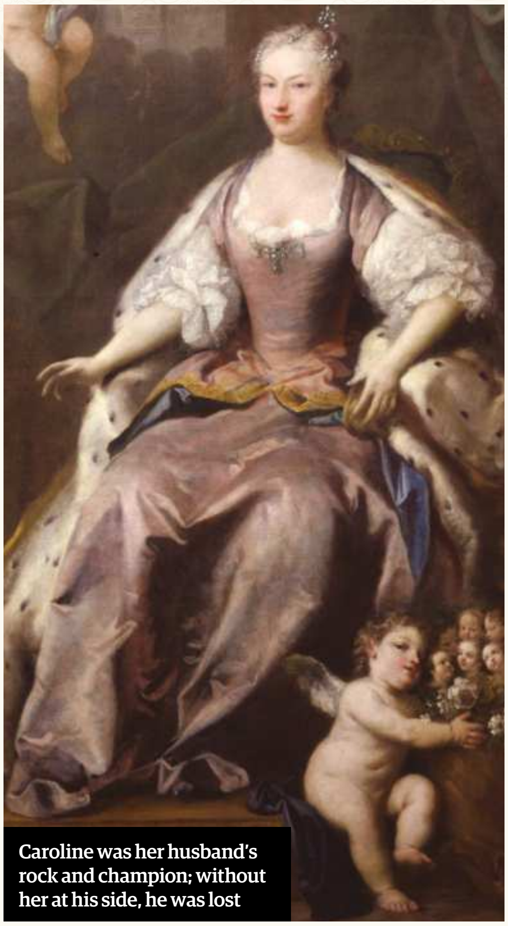
George II was the last British monarch to be born outside of Great Britain, as well as the last monarch to lead an army in battle. He was also a man with a hot temper who could be seen drop kicking his wig around the palace during tantrums, and who enjoyed the company of multiple mistresses, despite the fact that he held his wife, Caroline of Ansbach, as his most trusted and long-standing advisor.

When George II was just 11 years old, his mother, Sophia Dorothea of Celle, was locked away. Sadly, he never saw her again, nor did he ever forgive his father and, as the years passed, childish anger hardened into loathing.

As Prince of Wales, George did all he could to oppose King George I, cultivating relationships with opposition politicians until he was banished from court, his own children kept from him by the furious King. Desperate to see her youngsters again, the Princess of Wales, Caroline of Ansbach, encouraged a reconciliation between the King and his son, but the two men always remained frosty with one another. It was under George II that the Jacobite rebellions were defeated once and for all and he relished the thrill of battle, taking every opportunity to engage in combat.

Just as he had hated his father, George II came to despise his own son, Frederick, whom he saw as a pet of the King. Frederick had remained in Hanover when the rest of the family came to England and, under the influence of George I, he grew distant and estranged. When Frederick died in 1751, George II showed little emotion at the loss of his son, yet when his wife, Caroline, passed away in 1737, he was left bereft.

Caroline’s influence over George II was no secret and, indeed, had long been the subject of disdain and mockery but now, without her, he was completely lost. When he died over 20 years later, he left instructions that the sides of their coffins were to be removed, so that they might rest together once more.



Caroline was her husband's rock and champion; without her at his side, he was lost

Caroline of Ansbach

b.1683-d.1737

The illustrious Caroline

Caroline of Ansbach was, in many regards, the perfect royal consort. Intelligent, educated and in possession of a shrewd political brain, she was a devastating power to be reckoned with when she came to the throne at the side of George II. In fact, Caroline's early years had been spent with her mother, being dragged around the Dresden court following the death of her father, the Margrave of Ansbach. When she was orphaned, however, Caroline was taken in by the future King of Prussia and his wife, Sophia Charlotte, sister of George I. At the glittering Berlin court her life changed forever and, in a whirlwind of philosophy, learning and culture, she became one of the most eligible ladies in Europe.

Caroline and George's love story reads like fiction. The couple met and fell in love while he was in disguise, with Caroline unaware she was being romanced by the heir to the throne of Great Britain. Once they were wed she stood by him through thick and thin, whether feuding with his father, mutually loathing their son, Frederick, or indulging in the political intrigues that delighted her keen brain. After smallpox claimed the life of her father and almost killed her, George and their child, Caroline popularised new methods of treating the infection. She was popular in Britain thanks to her efforts to learn the language and her enthusiasm for English culture and society.

It was Caroline who championed Robert Walpole against her husband's better judgment, relying heavily on the guidance of the political giant. Once George II came to throne, her influence over him was widely satirised, as the commentators of the day wondered just who wore the crown.

Caroline died a grisly death as a result of a long-neglected hernia and a botched bowel operation. Her husband never really recovered from her loss and mourned her for the rest of his days.

William, Duke of Cumberland

b.1721-d.1765

The butcher

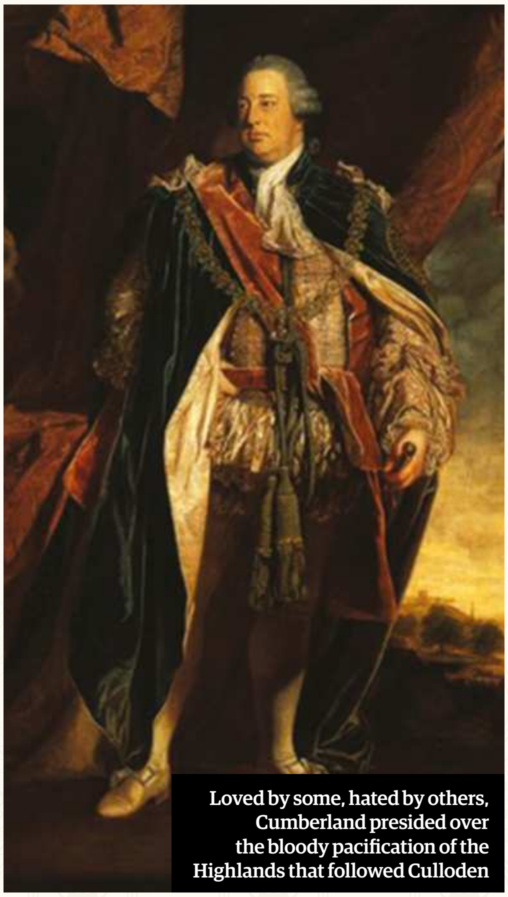
As favourite son of George II and Caroline of Ansbach, the Duke of Cumberland led a charmed life and enjoyed a dazzling military career. It was to Cumberland that the king turned in July 1745, when Bonnie Prince Charlie arrived in Scotland intending to claim the throne. But when the two men met on the field of Culloden in April 1746, the result was a crushing defeat for the Scots.

Following the bloody battle, Cumberland gave the order to leave no rebel unpunished, whether soldier or civilian. The wounded were slaughtered where they lay and the pacification of the Highlands swept across the land, with those who had not been on the field rounded up, tried and sentenced to execution or transportation.

As a result of this, Cumberland was nicknamed 'the Butcher' by his enemies, while his champions hailed him as 'Sweet William', the conquering hero. Cumberland, however, would not be the man of the hour for long and, during the Seven Years' War, he went to the aid of Prussian forces under the command of Frederick the Great.

But instead of a victory, Cumberland's forces were defeated and French troops marched into Hanover. George II was horrified that his ancestral lands were under occupation and gave his son the authority to negotiate with the French. It was a bad move and Cumberland signed the Convention of Klosterzeven, which agreed that Hanover would remain partially under French occupation, offering no assistance to Prussia.

Frederick the Great regarded the agreement as a betrayal and Cumberland returned home in disgrace, his controversial military career brought to a sudden halt. Under his nephew, George III, Cumberland became an advisor, yet he is remembered today as 'the Butcher', the man who ordered the pacification of the Highlands and then sat back to play cards.



Loved by some, hated by others, Cumberland presided over the bloody pacification of the Highlands that followed Culloden

George III

b.1738-d.1820 ♛ 1760-1820

The mad king

George III is remembered for two things: America and madness. The rest of his long reign is eclipsed by the events that took place in the American colonies and those that transpired behind closed doors at Kew and Windsor, as 'Farmer George' descended into blindness and insanity.

George III came to the throne at the age of just 22. He had been preparing for the role of King since the death of his father, Frederick, Prince of Wales, in 1751 and for the shy, quiet young man, it was a duty that was to weigh heavy on his mind. At first reliant on his mother, Augusta of Saxe-Gotha, and his tutor and mentor, the Earl of Bute, it was a cautious George who embarked on what was to be a six-decade reign as the King of Great Britain.

Although George's years on the throne were turbulent, his domestic life was not. Unique among the Georgian kings, George III was faithful to Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, his wife of nearly 60 years, and the couple had 15 children. Even more remarkably, 13 of those children survived into adulthood, which was unusual for the time.

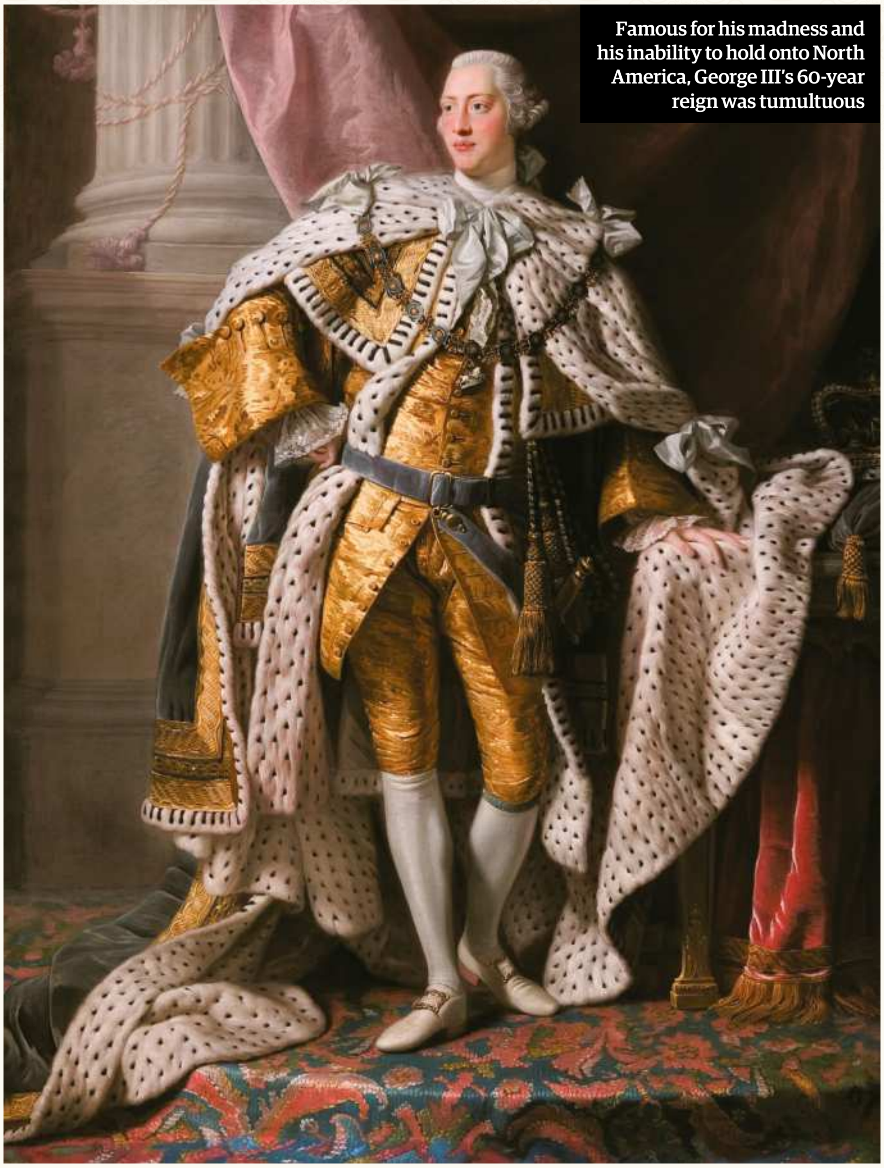
The reign of George III was marked by political turmoil both at home and abroad, but none more serious than in North America, where "no taxation without representation" had become a deafening rallying cry. When the American War of Independence broke out in 1775, George fatally underestimated the scale of the problem. By the time he realised that this was more than a storm in a Boston tea ship, it was too late.

When two of George's sons died in early childhood within just a year of one another, the gentle King's health sadly took a turn for the worse and went into decline. In 1788 he was secluded at Kew and put into the care of Dr Francis Willis, who was known for his medical treatment of the mad. Foaming at the mouth and jabbering incoherently, the King was subjected to brutal treatments, which were aimed at curing his madness. Dunked in ice baths, bled by leeches and with his shaven head covered with leeches or mustard, the monarch was a broken man, a shadow of his former self.

Though George recovered his wits, the clock was now ticking down to the Regency and, in 1811, that moment came. The death of Princess Amelia, George's youngest child, had tipped him over the edge into irretrievable madness. This time there would be no recovery and, blind, incoherent and insensible, King George III was taken to Windsor. He would never leave.

His son, George, Prince of Wales, was named as Prince Regent and the King was never seen in public again. At Windsor he languished, chatting to the ghosts of his dead children, holding audiences with invisible politicians and commanding troops that nobody else could see. When his devoted wife Charlotte died in 1818, exhausted by sadness and frail beyond her years, George had no comprehension that his wife was gone, or that she was buried at Windsor, the place that had become his home and his whole world.

It was here that King George III died in the deep winter of 1820. Despite his years away from the public eye, however, he had not been forgotten by the public and the nation was plunged into mourning at the news of the late King's death. He was laid to rest at Windsor Castle beside his beloved wife Charlotte and, as had been the King's wish, the coffins of those children who had predeceased him were brought to join their mother and father in the royal chapel, resting together at last as a family.



Famous for his madness and his inability to hold onto North America, George III's 60-year reign was tumultuous

> "The reign of George III was marked by political turmoil both at home and abroad"

George IV

b.1762-d.1830

Prince Regent: 1811-1820, King: 1820-1830

The king of bling

The First Gentleman of England, famed for his good looks, wit and charm as much for his ballooning weight, gambling and womanising, George IV could not have been more different to his father. The oldest of George III and Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz's 15 children, George was also the most troublesome and raised embarrassing his staid parents to an art form.

Though George III had modest tastes, his son liked the finest things in life and by the age of just 21, he was living in Carlton House, his life wild, rich, extravagant and lived at full pace. He ploughed a third of his allowance into his stables alone and lived as though money was no object, throwing enormous parties, gambling and, of course, entertaining ladies. One woman in particular caught his roving eye though, and when he secretly married the twice-widowed Roman Catholic Maria Fitzherbert, George crossed a line that his father would not countenance.

The 1701 Act of Settlement ruled that no heir to the throne could be crowned if married to a Roman Catholic and the 1772 Royal Marriages Act prohibited any marriage without the consent of the King, but George IV wasn't about to let that stop him. When gossip about the marriage began to be spread and heard around London, George had his representatives simply dismiss it as a false rumour, leaving Maria devastated. In return for the dismissal, he received a hefty sum of money to pay off his numerous debts yet, when he needed even more money later on, it was not so easily raised.

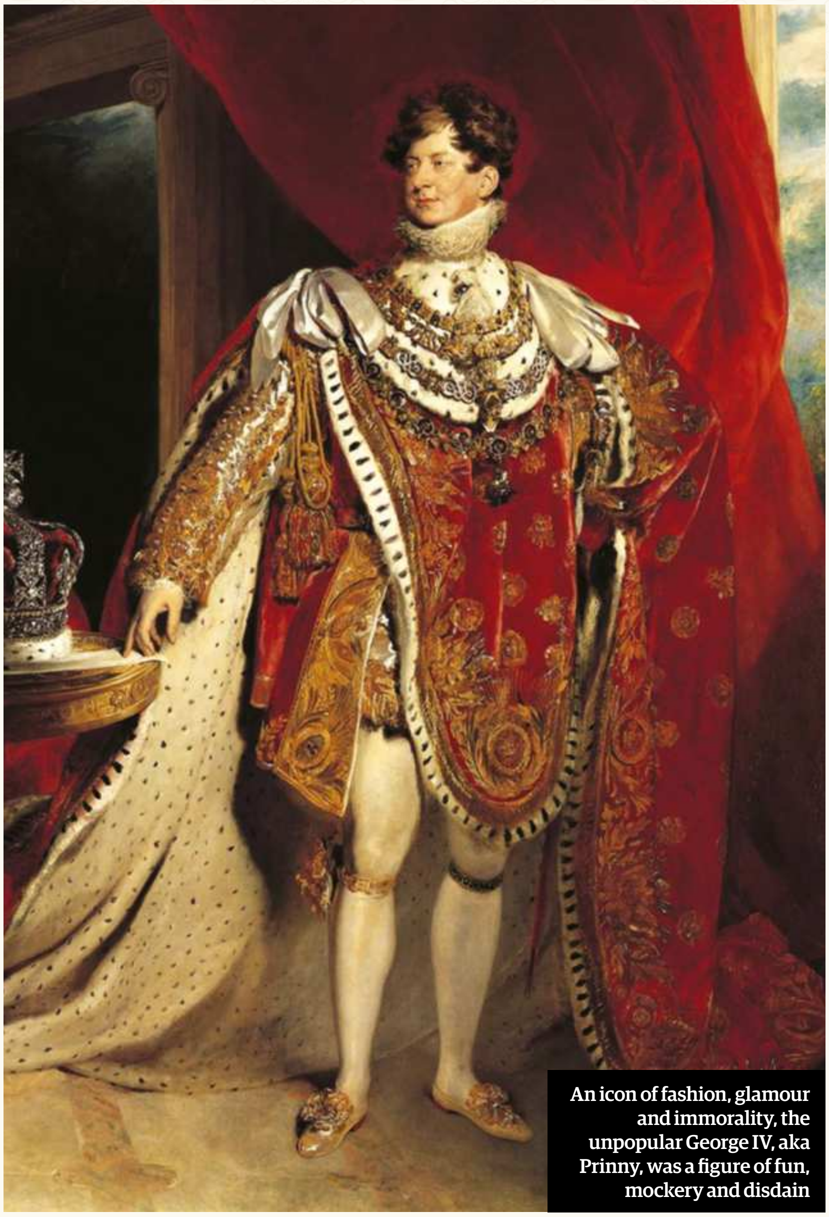
In 1795, George agreed to marry his cousin, Caroline of Brunswick, on the understanding that his new debts would be settled. However, the marriage was a disaster from the off. The couple soon separated and plunged into a world of court cases, scandal and rumour in which Caroline always emerged victorious, her reputation untarnished even as George sank ever lower in the esteem of the public.

George assumed power as Prince Regent in 1811, when his father fell ill. Always a passionate follower of politics, he fell under the influence of ambitious ministers on all sides. Far more to his liking was fashion, art and architecture, and he championed much of the Regency style that we recognise today. Still, those enormous, extravagant dinners and gallons of alcohol eventually took their toll on the King's health and, with the death of his only child, Charlotte, he began to retreat out of the public eye, cosseting himself away with his mistresses and the memory of Mrs Fitzherbert, who had long since left him.

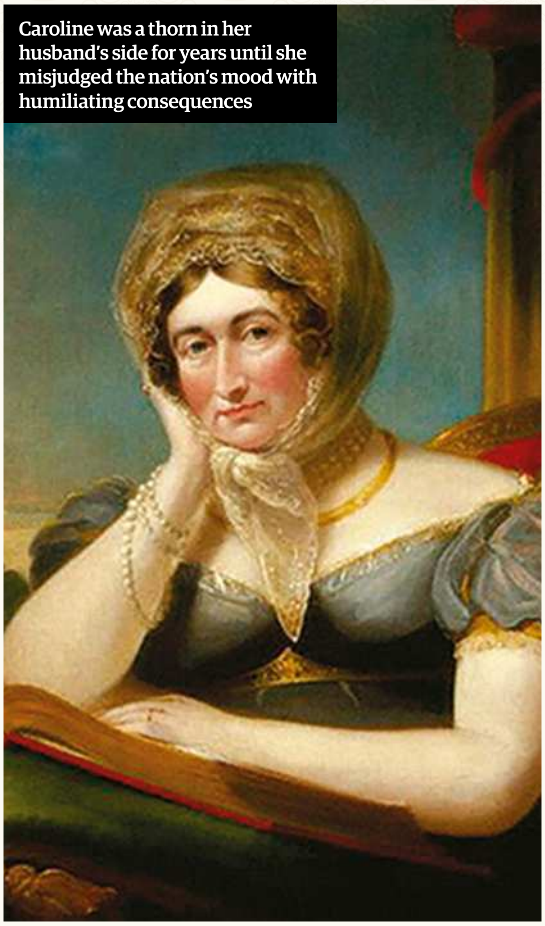
When George III passed away in 1820, George IV's coronation was the greatest extravaganza that the country had ever seen. Riding a wave of patriotism he knew for the first time what it was to be loved by his subjects, yet for the new King, it was too little, too late. The brief brush with popularity was over almost as soon as it had begun and, once again, he found himself satirised and mocked.

Although George's loathed wife died that same year, his health was already in decline and he had just ten years left to enjoy his reign as King. Like his father had before him, George IV retreated to Windsor Castle, his enormous bulk restricting his movement, keeping him from sleep and putting paid to the extravagant life he had once enjoyed.

It was at Windsor that George died in 1830, the symbol of all that was glittering and glamorous in Regency England gone forever.


An icon of fashion, glamour and immorality, the unpopular George IV, aka Prinny, was a figure of fun, mockery and disdain

> "He lived as though money was no object, his life wild and extravagant"



Caroline was a thorn in her husband's side for years until she misjudged the nation's mood with humiliating consequences

Caroline of Brunswick

b.1768-d.1821 ♛ 1820-1821

The queen of scandal

When Caroline of Brunswick married her cousin, George, Prince of Wales, in 1795, she couldn't have known what she was letting herself in for. He had agreed to the marriage in return for the settlement of all his debts and she had dreams of one day ruling as queen, though from the start, the signs were not good. George fainted at the sight of her while she wondered what had happened to the handsome young man she had seen in portraits, looking at the rather portly prince with barely disguised revulsion.

George was drunk on their wedding night and as soon as their only child, Charlotte, was born, they went their separate ways. From that day forward, Caroline and George fought a pitched battle for the support of the public and their mutual acquaintances.

He claimed she had an illegitimate child and subjected her to a humiliating enquiry from which Caroline emerged innocent, with George the definite villain of the peace. Even when Caroline left England for Europe and the arms of a strapping former Italian solider, George couldn't let it go. He demanded a divorce, resulting in more public criticism, while Caroline, no matter what she got up to, remained as popular as ever. Radicals rallied to her cause and she fanned the flames of discord, playing the wronged woman like a consummate actress.

With the death of George III, however, Caroline made her biggest mistake. She was determined to be crowned queen and arrived in England amid much excitement. On the day of the coronation, however, she misjudged the public mood disastrously. Denied entry to Westminster Abbey, the gathered crowds looked on Caroline as a troublemaker, an unwanted note of drama on a day of celebration.

With the jeers of the crowds ringing in her ears she had no choice but to flee without her crown. Just weeks later, she was dead.

Princess Charlotte of Wales

b.1796-d.1817

The princess of hearts

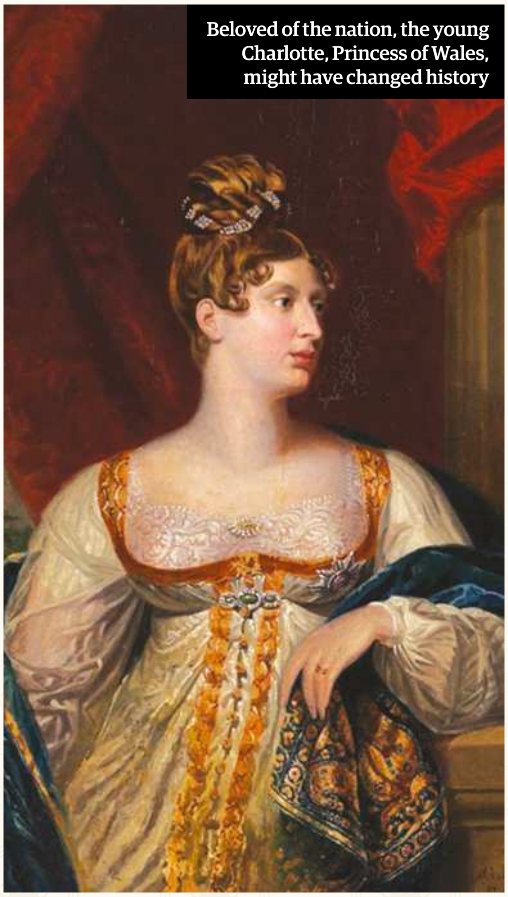
Charlotte, Princess of Wales, was the only child of George IV and Caroline of Brunswick, the husband and wife who hated one another. From the earliest days of her childhood she had been used as a weapon, with George refusing permission for the little girl to see her mother until, desperate, she ran away from the opulent surroundings of Montague House.

When Charlotte was returned to her father's custody, the pair realised that this could hardly go on. The hard-headed prince and his sensitive, smart daughter tried to find a way to live together, even as she grew from a girl into a woman. When the time came for Charlotte to marry, she knew exactly whom she wanted and that was Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld.

George, however, had other ideas, sure that he could make a much more impressive match. Yet the obstinate Charlotte persevered and she got her wish, married to Leopold not out of duty, but for love. The couple were wild about each other and soon Charlotte was pregnant, her child destined to be the heir to the throne of Great Britain.

Tragically, neither Charlotte nor her baby survived the agonising labour and she died in November 1817, as she gave birth to a stillborn son. With their favourite princess dead, the public sank into deep mourning and her father was utterly consumed by grief, seized by a deep depression that persevered long after Charlotte's death.

The death of Charlotte, Princess of Wales, and her child changed the history of Great Britain forever. With the heiress to the throne and her newborn dead, there was no other child of George IV and Caroline of Brunswick waiting in the wings. Instead, at George's death the crown passed to his brother, William IV and from him, to a certain lady you may have heard of. Her name, of course, was Victoria.



Beloved of the nation, the young Charlotte, Princess of Wales, might have changed history

© Getty Images

Catherine Palace in the snow is a sight to behold

© Getty Images

ROMANOV

1613-1917

A reign characterised by intrigue, ambition, treachery and revolution, the Romanov dynasty – the last royal family of Russia – met its tragic fate after 300 years of rule

Words KATHARINE MARSH & ANDREA ZUVICH

Ushered into a basement in Yekaterinburg in the dead of night, the House of Romanov met its end on the Russian throne at the point of guns and bayonets. Revolution had won out, and the royal family was no more - those who weren't murdered fled, never to return to their homeland. But the Romanovs were no strangers to conflict.

In the crucible of civil war in 1613, Michael I took the crown, bringing an end to the 15-year-long Time of Troubles. His election to the throne began 300 years of uninterrupted Romanov rule - although it did become the House of Holstein-Gottorp-Romanov - and it's from this family that we have some of Russia's best-known monarchs. Peter the Great expanded the empire's borders and laid the groundwork for what would become the Russian Navy between 1682 and 1725. Ivan VI became tsar at just two months old, but a coup saw him imprisoned and stripped of his crown, spending the rest of his life incarcerated before dying at the age of 23. Elizabeth successfully led her country through two major conflicts - namely the War of Austrian Succession and the Seven Years' War. Catherine the Great, originally hailing from Prussia, made a point of modernising her adopted homeland.

However, while the remaining Romanovs live abroad today, the legacy of the family is still present in Russia. Beautiful palaces stand as a reminder of times gone by, with the Catherine Palace looking stunning in blue, white and gold. In Saint Petersburg, the Winter Palace is still in use, only now it is home to the Hermitage State Museum. There are also a further 50 or so imperial residences in the city.

The Romanovs have never been far from the public consciousness. For decades, the mystery of the fate of Grand Duchess Anastasia kept interest in the royal family alive, and it has far from waned since then. Tsar Nicholas II and his family may have perished in the early 20th century, but it's unlikely that the rich tapestry of Russian imperial history will ever be forgotten.

This photograph shows members of the Romanov dynasty in c.1887-92, with Tsar Alexander III third from the right in the seated front row

The Church on the Blood in Yekaterinburg was built on the spot where Tsar Nicholas II and his family were murdered

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The PEDIGREE

Discover the lineage of the tsars and tsarinas that took Russia from imperial autocracy to ruin and revolution

Order of succession

Marriage

1
1613-1645
Michael Romanov
b.1596-d.1645
Turn to page 72

2
1645-1676
Alexis I
b.1629-d.1676
Second tsar of the dynasty, Alexis I had 16 children between two wives - 13 with Maria and three with Natalya.

Maria Miloslavskaya
b.1625-d.1669

Natalya Naryshkina
b.1651-d.1694

3
1676-1682
Feodor III
b.1661-d.1682
Disfigured and half-paralysed, the young tsar was disabled from birth. His death sparked the Moscow Uprising of 1682.

Sophia
b.1657-d.1704
Turn to page 72

4
1682-1689
Ivan V
b.1666-d.1696
Seriously disabled both physically and mentally, Ivan V co-reigned with Peter the Great. His sister served as his regent.

Praskovia Slatykova
b.1664-d.1723

Eudoxia Lopukhina
b.1669-d.1731

5
1682-1725
Peter the Great
b.1672-d.1725
Turn to page 73

6
1725-1727
Catherine I
b.1684-d.1727
Second wife of Peter the Great, Catherine was the first woman to rule Imperial Russia. She was considered a just and fair ruler.

Charlotte Christine
b.1694-d.1715

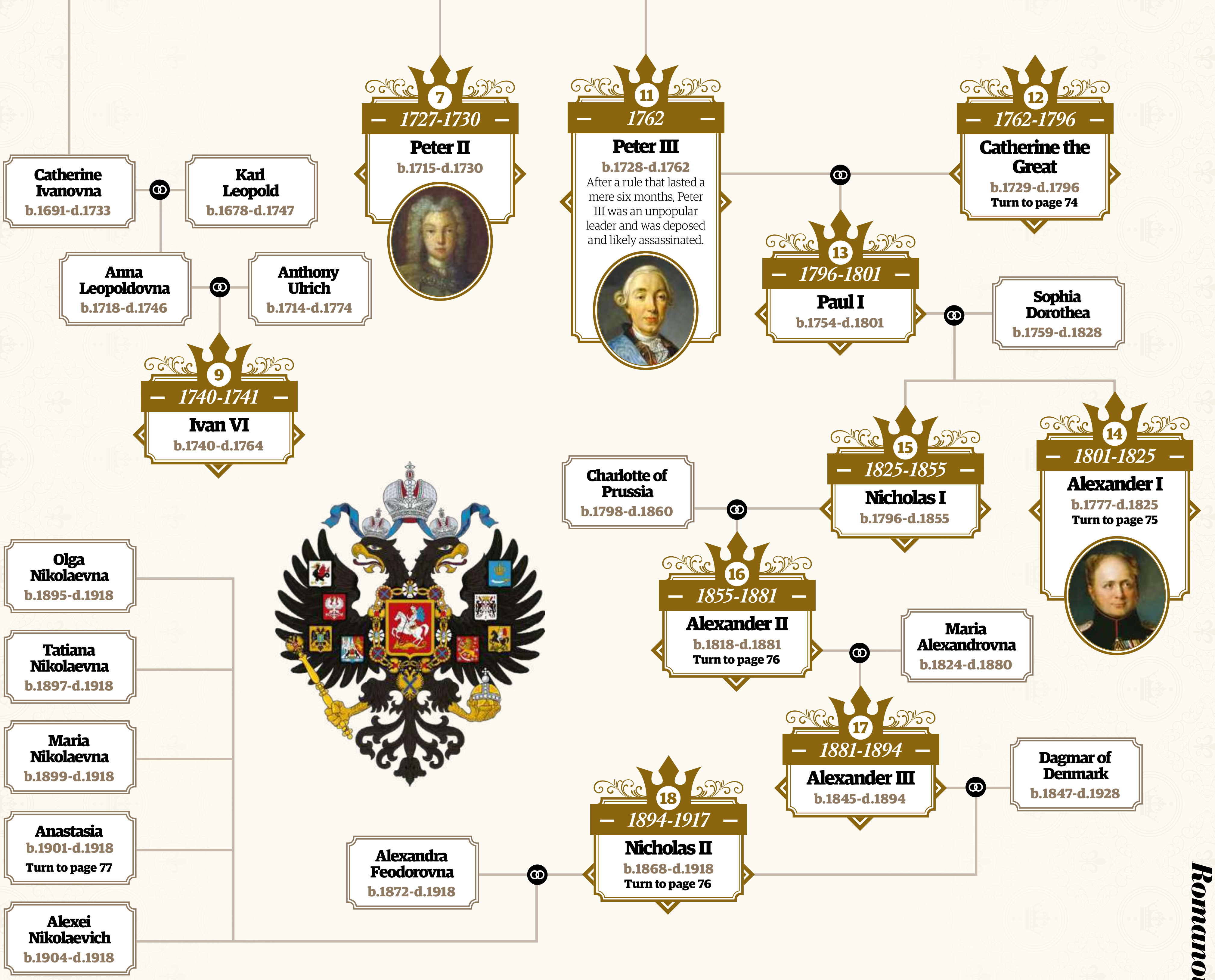
Alexei Petrovich
b.1690-d.1718

Charles Frederick
b.1700-d.1739

Anna Petrovna
b.1708-d.1728

8
1730-1740
Anna
b.1693-d.1740
Under the strict care of her mother, Anna was prevented development of a personality, which made her a cruel ruler of the dynasty.

10
1741-1762
Elizabeth I
b.1709-d.1762
Turn to page 74



Catherine Ivanovna
b.1691-d.1733

Karl Leopold
b.1678-d.1747

Anna Leopoldovna
b.1718-d.1746

Anthony Ulrich
b.1714-d.1774

9
1740-1741
Ivan VI
b.1740-d.1764

7
1727-1730
Peter II
b.1715-d.1730

11
1762
Peter III
b.1728-d.1762
After a rule that lasted a mere six months, Peter III was an unpopular leader and was deposed and likely assassinated.

12
1762-1796
Catherine the Great
b.1729-d.1796
Turn to page 74

13
1796-1801
Paul I
b.1754-d.1801

Sophia Dorothea
b.1759-d.1828

15
1825-1855
Nicholas I
b.1796-d.1855

14
1801-1825
Alexander I
b.1777-d.1825
Turn to page 75

Charlotte of Prussia
b.1798-d.1860

16
1855-1881
Alexander II
b.1818-d.1881
Turn to page 76

Maria Alexandrovna
b.1824-d.1880

17
1881-1894
Alexander III
b.1845-d.1894

Dagmar of Denmark
b.1847-d.1928

18
1894-1917
Nicholas II
b.1868-d.1918
Turn to page 76

Alexandra Feodorovna
b.1872-d.1918

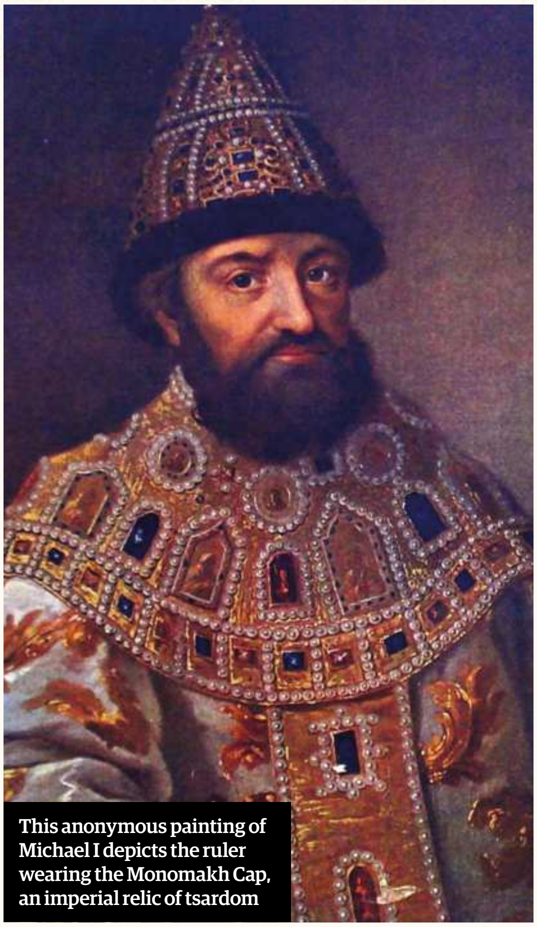
Olga Nikolaevna
b.1895-d.1918

Tatiana Nikolaevna
b.1897-d.1918

Maria Nikolaevna
b.1899-d.1918

Anastasia
b.1901-d.1918
Turn to page 77

Alexei Nikolaevich
b.1904-d.1918


This anonymous painting of Michael I depicts the ruler wearing the Monomakh Cap, an imperial relic of tsardom

Michael I

b.1596-d.1645 ♔ 1613-1645

The patriarch

Michael Fyodorovich Romanov was little more than a boy when he came to the throne in 1613. Since the death of the last tsar of the Rurik dynasty, Feodor Ivanovich, in 1598, Russia had stumbled into a dark era that came to be known as the Time of Troubles.

A widespread famine added to the already tempestuous political climate, and various men (such as Boris Godunov, the False Dmitry, Vasily Shuisky) vied for power. Assassinations and massacres ensued, plus foreign invasions and internal uprisings such as the Bolotnikov Rebellion of 1606-07, made this time all the more treacherous.

Out of this terrible phase, the Romanovs - a family related to the Rurik tsar Ivan the Terrible's first wife - were judged in a national assembly to be the best fit to rule the country. From this family, the gentle, self-effacing 16-year-old Michael Romanov was elected. His father was Patriarch Philaret (previously Fyodor Nikitich Romanov) and his mother was Xenia Shestova, who was a member of the Saltykov family. Despite his mother's very natural and rational concerns about the probable dangerous position this now put her son in, the new ruler was crowned Michael I, Tsar of All Russia, on 21 July 1613, in Cathedral of the Assumption in the Kremlin, Moscow.

With the need to secure the new Romanov dynasty, the new tsar was strongly encouraged to marry and so beget the necessary heir - and he ended up marrying twice. In late 1624, Michael wed Princess Maria Vladimirovna Dolgorukova; unfortunately, this marriage lasted only four months due to Maria's sudden death. Not long after, Michael married Eudoxia Streshnyova, and this marriage proved a much greater success. Eudoxia bore him ten children, including the future Tsar Alexei I of Russia. Michael died a day after his 49th birthday in 1645.

Sophia Alekseyevna

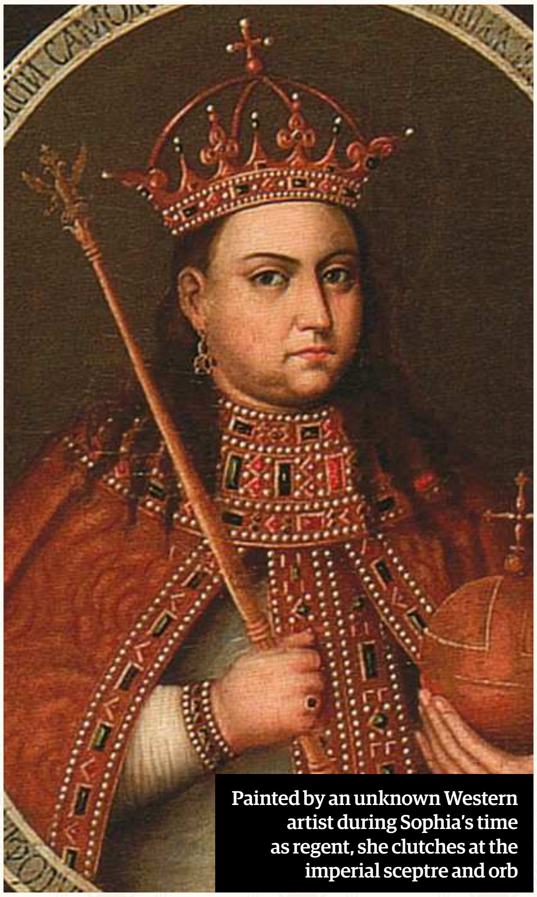
b.1657-d.1704 ♔ Regent: 1682-1689

A female regent

Sophia was the daughter of Alexei and was also the sister of Feodor III, the short-lived tsar whose 20-year life had been plagued by infirmities. At a time when women were largely withheld from power and veiled, the fact that Sophia Alekseyevna became a regent - and therefore a ruler - of Russia was quite an achievement. She was regent over her two younger brothers, tsars Ivan and Peter.

Foreign policy under her was the major political achievement of her regency. Russia and Poland had long fought over Ukraine, and especially its important city of Kiev. Sophia's single most influential adviser was Vasily Vasilyevich Golitsyn - a Westernised statesman from one of the great aristocratic houses, the Golitsyns. In the negotiations between Russian and Polish diplomats, a settlement was reached: Poland gave up its claim to Kiev in return for Russia joining in the fight against the Ottoman Empire, which was one of the biggest threats facing Europe. It was also during Sophia's regency that the first Russian-Chinese treaty - the Treaty of Nerchinsk of 1689 - was signed.

Sophia's downfall came about in a decidedly odd way. Tsar Peter - now 17 - was at Preobrazhenskoe, and there, a frantic attendant woke him from his sleep warning him that the Streltsy (Russian guards) were on their way to him. Peter ran, got a horse and fled to the Troitsky Monastery. Although there hadn't been any actual danger, the fact that the young tsar had taken refuge in a holy place was enough to make many supporters flock to his side - including the Patriarch. Eventually, Sophia was forced out from her position as regent and was sent to the Novodevichy Convent, where she died on the 14 July 1704, after living there for some years. Sophia Alekseyevna's regency marked one of the first instances of rule over Russia by a woman.


Painted by an unknown Western artist during Sophia's time as regent, she clutches at the imperial sceptre and orb

Peter the Great

b.1672-d.1725 1682-1725

The great one

Peter, the eldest of Tsar Alexei's children with his second wife Natalya, was considerably healthier than the rest of his half-brothers and sisters, several of whom had been born with various disabilities. Of the towering height of just over two metres, especially given the time period in which he lived, Peter was certainly a larger-than-life character. He wanted to modernise Russia and bring it into line with other more technologically advanced European nations, and he was keen to learn about how to get the ball rolling in this respect. One of the major things he wished to achieve was for Russia to have a navy, and so he made his way around Europe in pursuit of this vision, and then headed to Britain.

In January 1698, Peter arrived in London, where he met King William III and rented John Evelyn's house, Sayes Court, in Deptford. At first, Evelyn seems to have been satisfied with the situation.

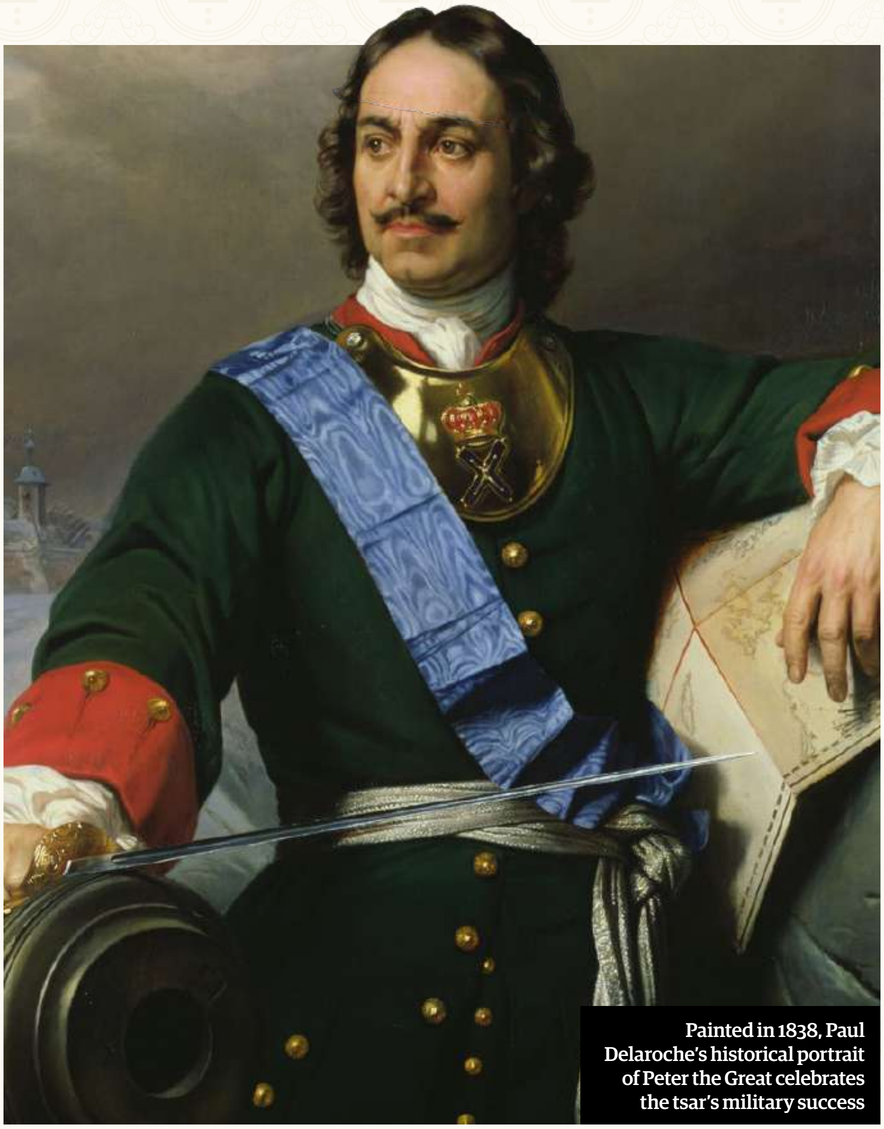
He wrote: "30 January 1698: The Czar of Muscovy being come to England, and having a mind to see the building of ships, hired my house at Sayes Court, and made it his court and palace, newly furnished for him by the King."

Peter held some drunken events at the house, and when he vacated, it was found that there were bullet holes in the paintings, the wood from the stairs had been wrenched up and used as firewood, and Evelyn's cherished holly bushes were badly damaged. Evelyn was most put out about what he found when he returned to his home.

He wrote: "9 June 1698: To Deptford, to see how miserably the Czar had left my house, after three months making it his Court. I got Sir Christopher Wren, the King's surveyor, and Mr. London, his gardener, to go and estimate the repairs, for which they allowed £150 in their report to the Lords of the Treasury."

William III gifted Peter a ship, and the Russian tsar had his portrait painted by court painter Godfrey Kneller (this fine, full-length painting is today often displayed at Kensington Palace). When Peter returned to Russia, he commissioned shipbuilding for a Russian navy (which was ready by 1703) and - strange, but true - on 5 September 1698, he instituted a tax on beards. He had seen that European men were clean-shaven and, despite the fact that beards were very much part of Russian culture at that time, wanted Russia to also adopt this facial hair-free style.

Despite his reforms in areas of trade, administration, and more, Russia was largely still feudal when it came to its serfs. In most Western European countries, serfdom had declined substantially as a result of the Black Death, but Russia would keep serfs until Tsar Alexander's emancipation reform in the 19th century. Serfs even during Peter the Great's time were still considered almost subhuman.

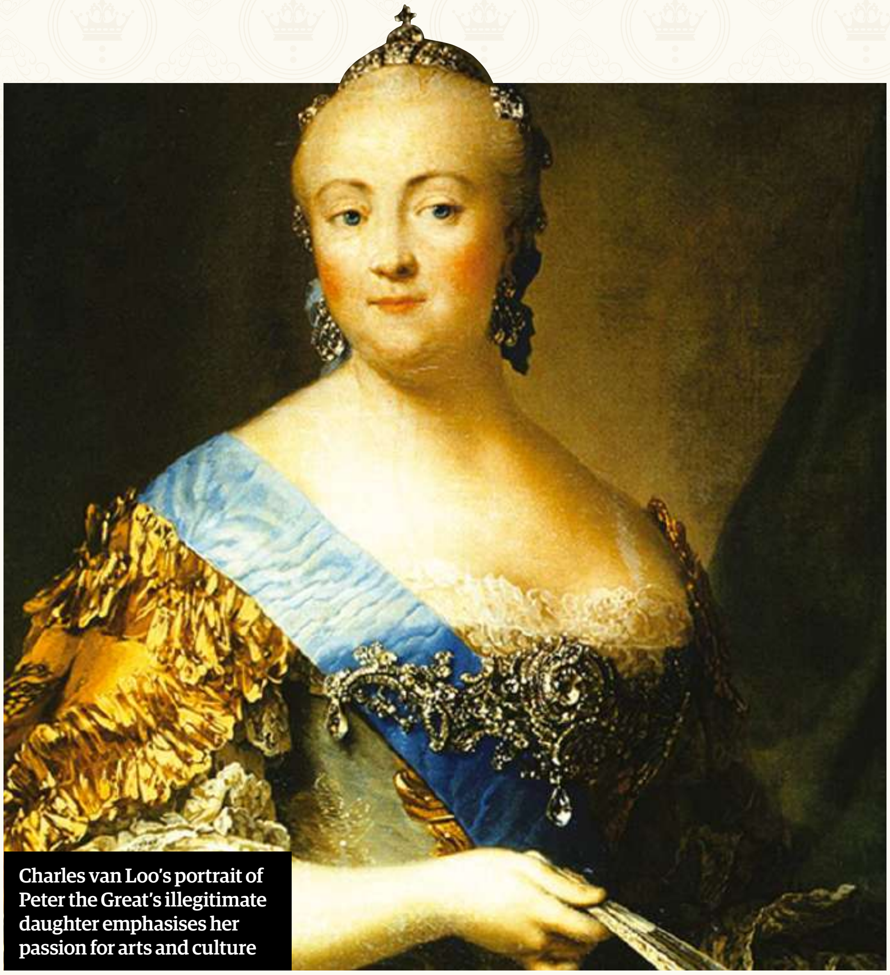


Painted in 1838, Paul Delaroche's historical portrait of Peter the Great celebrates the tsar's military success

"Strange, but true – on 5 September 1698, he instituted a tax on beards"

When it came to his personal life, Peter married twice and also had mistresses. His marriage to his first wife, Eudoxia Lupukhina, was an arrangement made by his mother in 1689 and was unhappy, even though it produced three children. In 1698, Peter forced Eudoxia into a nunnery and obtained a divorce. Peter's second wife was Martha Skavronskaya, a Livonian (present-day Estonia and Latvia) peasant woman.

Peter, who had ruled for some 43 years, was struck down by a severe bladder infection - which was so inflamed he was unable to pass urine - and he died in Saint Petersburg on 25 January 1725. His reign proved to be one of the most successful in the Romanov dynasty. His wife, Martha, succeeded him for two years as Empress Catherine I of Russia until her death in 1727.



Charles van Loo's portrait of Peter the Great's illegitimate daughter emphasises her passion for arts and culture

Elizabeth

b.1709-d.1762 ♛ 1741-1762

An imperial Venus

Elizabeth, as the illegitimate daughter of Peter the Great and his mistress Catherine, was unlikely to ever rule. Even though her father eventually married her mother, Elizabeth had been born out of wedlock in 1709. Peter loved his children and, although accounts vary, it appears that he took an active interest in their education, as far as time permitted.

In terms of her physical attributes, Elizabeth, with her blue eyes, blonde tresses, and vivacious personality, was considered very attractive. This, combined with her intelligence and education was why Peter hoped to arrange a great marriage for her. One match he sought for Elizabeth was with King Louis XV of France, but her possible illegitimacy - combined with the fact that her mother had been a peasant - was enough to put an end to these aspirations.

In the Autumn of 1726, Elizabeth met Prince Charles Augustus of Holstein and the two fell in love. They were ready to announce their engagement in early 1727, when Elizabeth's mother sickened and died.

One terrible grief soon followed another, as only a month later, Elizabeth's beloved fiancé contracted smallpox and died. Elizabeth never officially married (although she was rumoured to have secretly wed her lover Alexis Razumovsky - her Ukrainian 'Emperor of the Night').

Elizabeth's sister, Grand Duchess Anna Petrovna, married Charles Frederick, Duke of Holstein-Gottorp, the brother of Prince Charles Augustus, but his boorish behaviour and the separation from her sister made her very unhappy.

In February of 1728, Anna gave birth to her only child, a son, but fever set in days later. Anna died from puerperal fever on 4 March 1728, aged only 20. The loss of her dear sister was yet another blow for Elizabeth. When Elizabeth died in 1762, her nephew Karl Peter Ulrich, succeeded her on the throne as Tsar Peter III.

Catherine the Great

b.1729-d.1796 ♛ 1762-1796

Killing for the crown

Sophie Augusta Fredericka was born on the 21 April 1729, to Prince Christian Augustus of Arnhalt-Zerbst and Princess Johanna Elizabeth of Holstein-Gottorp. Her parents had an unhappy union, exacerbated by Johanna's belief that she'd married beneath her to a man of inferior rank (Johanna was the sister of Prince Charles Augustus of Holstein, who had died shortly before he was to be married to Empress Elizabeth of Russia). Her mother, who had wanted a son, greeted the birth of Sophie with coldness and disappointment. The lack of maternal warmth that Johanna exhibited towards her daughter was not applied to her second child, a son, Wilhelm Christian, upon whom she lavished much affection. Despite this, Sophie was well-educated - learning under the French Huguenot Elizabeth Cardel and the more strict Pastor Wagner.

As an adolescent, Sophie was pragmatic when it came to her looks. She was then rather plain, and so endeavoured to make up for this by developing many other qualities. When she was 14, she met King Frederick the Great of Prussia, upon whom she made a favourable impression. His meeting with her prompted him to write to Empress Elizabeth of Russia about the young girl's intelligence, and this paved the way for the empress to consider Sophie as a bride for her son Peter.

The marriage between the 17-year-old Peter and his 16-year-old bride, Catherine (who had been given this new name when she converted to the Russian Orthodox Church) was not a merry union. Unlike her husband, Catherine made the most of her situation and worked very hard to learn the Russian language. In 1754, Catherine gave birth to a son, Paul Petrovich (later Tsar Paul I). His paternity is still questioned, and it was rumoured he was fathered by Serge Saltykov, who had been one of Catherine's lovers.

In 1762, Empress Elizabeth died, leaving the unpopular Peter the crown. Catherine and her supporters launched a coup d'état against her husband. In her memoirs, she wrote: "Peter III renounced the empire at Oranienbaum, in full liberty, surrounded by 1,500 Holstein troops, and came to Peterhoff, accompanied by Elizabeth Voronzoff, Godowitz, and Michael Ismafloff. There, as a guard, I assigned him five officers and some soldiers. This was on the 29th of June, the Feast of St Peter, at noon." Peter died shortly thereafter, possibly by murder. Catherine became sole ruler.

The subject of Catherine's paramours is of importance, for she was a person who needed love and support. Catherine had an illegitimate son with her lover Grigori

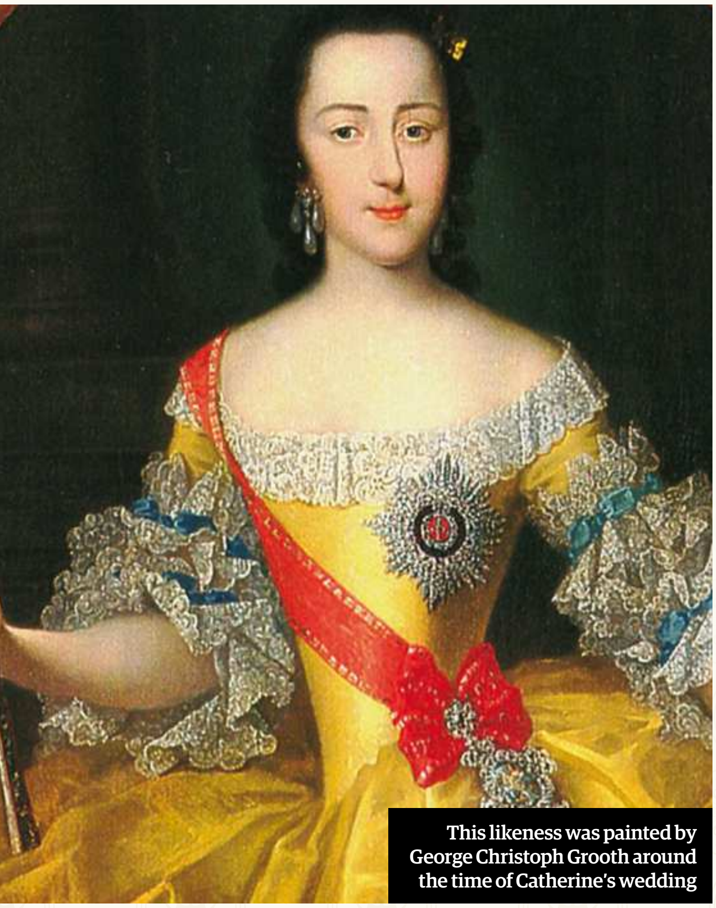
> “Catherine had an illegitimate son with her lover Grigori Orlov”

Orlov, and her only daughter, probably fathered by Stanisław Poniatowski, was born in 1757. Her most influential affair was with Grigory Potemkin – one of the great statesmen of 18th-century European history.

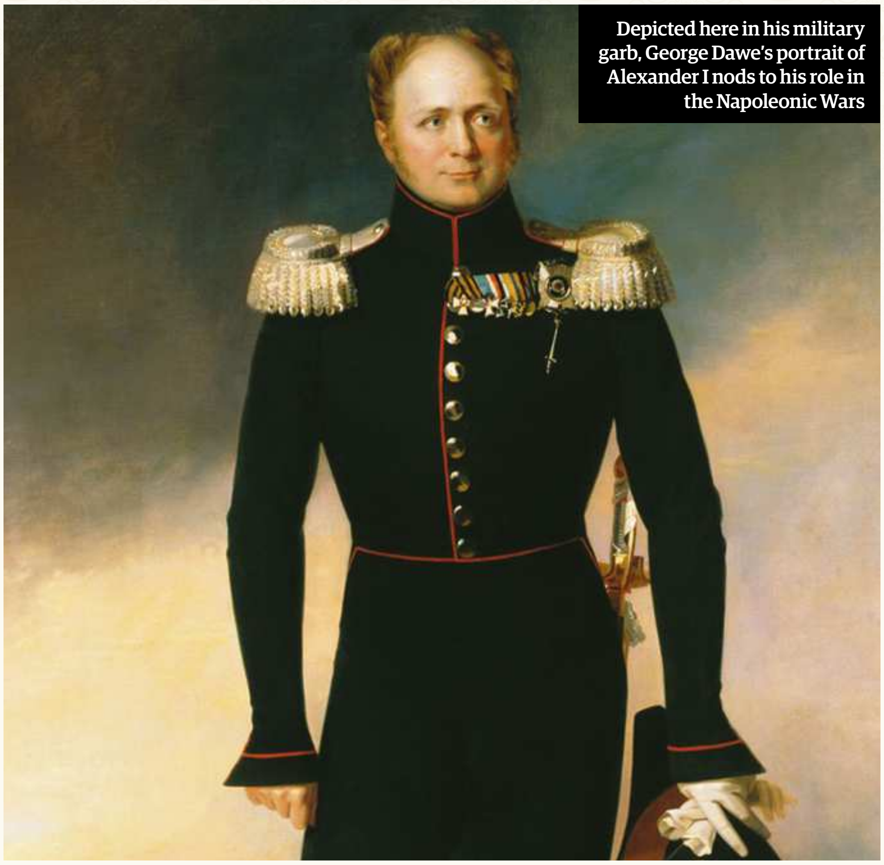
Catherine was a great lover of art and literature and she knew how to use propaganda. There are many portraits of her regally dressed and conveying a commanding sense of imperial majesty. She was a bibliophile and an intellectual, and maintained a close correspondence with some of the greatest minds of the Enlightenment including Denis Diderot and Voltaire. In 1795, Catherine founded the Imperial Public Library (now the National Library of Russia) in Saint Petersburg.

A popularly related story about Catherine was that she met her death by being crushed to death under the weight of a horse with which she was copulating. This is simply one of several malicious myths, for she died from a cerebral haemorrhage on 17 November 1796.

Catherine's reign was a testament to her political acumen and her Enlightenment ideals. The indelible stamp of her reign upon Russia can be seen to this day.



This likeness was painted by George Christoph Grooth around the time of Catherine's wedding



Depicted here in his military garb, George Dawe's portrait of Alexander I nods to his role in the Napoleonic Wars

Alexander I

b.1777-d.1825 ♛ 1801-1825

A tsar at war

Alexander was the son of Tsar Paul I, who was the son of Catherine the Great and Tsar Peter III (though some continued to speculate his father was Serge Saltykov). Empress Catherine favoured her grandson Alexander over her son Paul, and this created a rather difficult dynamic. In 1793, Alexander married the beautiful Princess Louise of Baden. This marriage began happily enough, but over time and with the death of their two daughters, their relationship deteriorated. When Tsar Paul was assassinated in 1801, Alexander became tsar.

Best known for being the tsar of Leo Tolstoy's epic historical novel War And Peace set during the Napoleonic Wars, Alexander I is most known for his on/off friendship with Napoleon Bonaparte. Alexander was present at the Battle of Austerlitz in 1805, and was in power when Napoleon invaded Russia in 1812, during which the Battle of Borodino was fought.

This tsar had connections to Queen Victoria of Britain. When she was born at Kensington Palace in 1819, she was christened Alexandrina Victoria in honour of him, her godfather.

Tsar Alexander died from Typhus in Taganrog, Russia, on 1 December 1825. As none of his legitimate children had survived, his brother became his successor as Tsar Nicholas I. This was by no means a smooth transition. On 26 December that year, an uprising that came to be known as the Decembrist Revolt took place in Peter's Square in Saint Petersburg. Led by army officers at the head of some 3,000 soldiers, these protestors were alarmed that Alexander's brother Constantine Pavlovich had been overlooked in favour of the younger brother, Nicholas. The reality was that Constantine had no desire to become tsar. The uprising had been for nought, and five of the Decembrists were hanged. The rest were exiled to areas such as Siberia. Nicholas's 30-year reign ended with his death in the Winter Palace in 1855.

Photographed here in either 1878 or 1881, the assassinated tsar was also known as Alexander the Liberator

Alexander II

b.1818-d.1881 ♛ 1855-1881

The assassin's choice

Alexander Nicholaievich was the son of Tsar Nicholas I and Alexandra Fyodorovna. By the time Alexander ascended the throne in March of 1865, Russia was in the midst of the Crimean War. Russia, largely alone in the conflict against a massive coalition of British, French, Ottoman and Sardinian forces, lost – which led to the signing of the Treaty of Paris of 1856.

Alexander was a lusty character, as his sexually explicit letters to his mistress Princess Yekaterina (Katya) Mikhailovna Dolgorukova clearly show. When his wife Marie of Hesse and by Rhine (whom the Mariinsky Theatre was named after) died in 1880, Alexander and Katya embarked upon a morganatic marriage.

In 1861, Alexander II issued the Emancipation of the Serfs, which freed all serfs from their owners. This was a radical reform, and not everyone was pleased with the results. Some thought the reforms under Alexander were simply not enough, and indeed in many aspects of Russian society, things were well behind other European nations. In 1867, Alexander sold the Russian territory of Alaska to the United States of America for $7.2 million, and gold was later found in the nearby Yukon in the 1890s.

Despite his major reformations, there were those who resented power being held by tsars (which would culminate with the Bolsheviks in 1917). Alexander II was targeted for assassination several times throughout his reign. Then, on 13 March 1881, terrorists from 'The People's Will' threw a bomb under Alexander's carriage. The tsar suffered catastrophic wounds – his legs torn off by the blast, and other parts of his body were badly damaged and he was losing blood fast.

Many people, including the terrorist, were killed or injured in this assassination. The tsar, still clinging to life, was taken back to his home, where his family gathered around him before he died from his wounds.

Nicholas II

b.1868-d.1918 ♛ 1894-1917

The last Romanov

The history of Nicholas II, his wife and his children is one of the great tragedies of the Romanov dynasty. The family line, which had ruled over Russia for over 300 years, came to a bloody end in 1918 with Nicholas at the helm. Nicholas was the son of Tsar Alexander III and Maria Feodorovna. Alexander was known as the 'Peacemaker' because Russia was not involved in any major warfare during his reign.

Through his mother's side, Nicholas was closely related to both King George V of the British Empire and the controversial character Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany. In the 1890s, Nicholas fell in love with the German Princess Alix of Hesse, who was a granddaughter of Queen Victoria. On 26 November 1894, the couple were married at the Winter Palace in Saint Petersburg.

They went on to have five children: four daughters, Olga, Tatiana, Maria, Anastasia, and one son, Alexei. The latter suffered from

Posing here two years before he ascended the Russian throne, Nicholas II was never properly prepared for his future role as tsar haemophilia, which had been carried from Queen Victoria through her children.

It was Alexei's hereditary illness that was the cause of Alexandra's great anxiety. In her desperation, she turned to the ministrations of Grigory Rasputin - a mystic and peasant. Rasputin's perceived hold over the tsar and tsarina became a major source of anger and resentment. He did have great influence over Alexandra, and was the target of an assassination attempt in 1914. Unsuccessful that time, Rasputin was eventually assassinated in December of 1916.

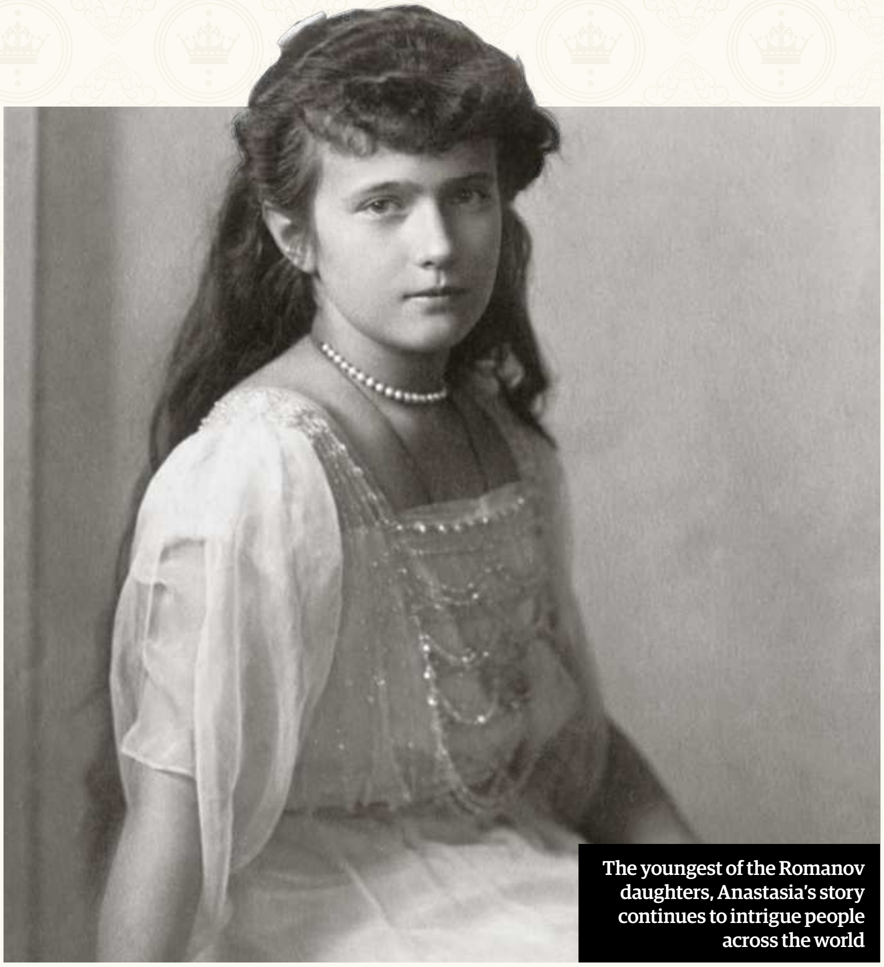
> "The entire Romanov family was shot or stabbed to death"

The reign of Nicholas II was characterised by violent episodes including Russia's involvement in World War I, which resulted in the deaths of more than 3 million Russians. Nicholas's reign was also plagued by uprisings, including the Russian Revolution of 1905, and the later revolutions of 1917 that would see his power stripped away. Vladimir Lenin emerged as the leader of the Bolsheviks, a radical group formed out of the Russian Social-Democratic Workers' Party. Nicholas abdicated on 15 March 1917, following the February Revolution.

With the Romanov family in an incredibly precarious position, the British government sought to offer the ill-fated family asylum in Great Britain. Yet, with the royal family of Britain itself facing dissatisfaction and controversy surrounding its Germanic roots, as well as the British population's view of Nicholas II as a tyrant, Nicholas's cousin, King George V, intervened and withdrew the offer in June in an attempt to preserve the monarchy. In October of that same year, another revolution occurred, leading to the Bolshevik takeover and the beginning of the Soviet era.

The Romanovs were imprisoned in various places, but were finally moved to the Ipatiev House, Yekaterinburg, in the Ural Mountains. Early on the morning of 17 July 1918, the family was awakened from their sleep and told they had to be moved to a safe place. This was not the case, and they were ushered into a basement room where they were informed that the Ural Executive Committee had decided that they were to be executed. The entire Romanov family was shot or stabbed to death with bayonets. Who gave the orders for their executions is still uncertain, though it seems likely to have been Lenin.

In 1991, the remains of Nicholas II, his wife, and three of their daughters - which had been missing since the execution - were uncovered and subjected to analysis. These were interred at the Peter and Paul Cathedral in Saint Petersburg in 1998. By 2000, Tsar Nicholas II was canonised by the Russian Orthodox Church.



The youngest of the Romanov daughters, Anastasia's story continues to intrigue people across the world

Anastasia

b.1901-d.1918

The lost princess

Grand Duchess Anastasia, the youngest daughter of Tsar Nicholas II and his wife Alexandra, is probably the most well-known member of the Romanov family. This, in large part, is due to the fact that Anastasia was the subject of great mystery from the time of her family's execution in 1918 and throughout the rest of the 20th Century.

From her birth in 1901, the second youngest of the Romanov children - after Alexei - Anastasia was renowned for her humour, mischievous nature and energy. One of the children's nannies once claimed that Anastasia was the most charming of all the children she had met.

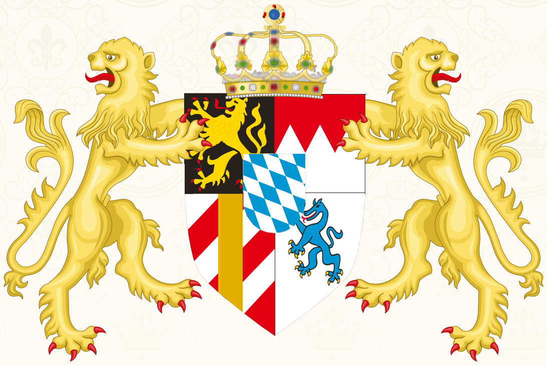
Along with her father, mother and four siblings, Anastasia was eventually moved to Ipatiev House in Yekaterinburg, where the family and their closest aides were quickly and brutally murdered. Rumours spread widely that Anastasia somehow survived the horrific executions and escaped, perhaps with the help of a sympathetic soldier. After 1918, several women came forward claiming to be the long-lost duchess. The most famous of these imposters was Anna Anderson - real name Franziska Schanzkowska - whose DNA was later tested and the results proved she had no connection to the Romanovs.

As well as inspiring multiple impostors, con artists and runaways, the speculation surrounding the youngest grand duchess's possible survival sparked plenty of dramatisations and stories, including books, plays and films, such as Disney's Anastasia.

With the remains of the parents and three daughters found in 1991, flames of speculation were once again fanned about the whereabouts of the missing son and daughter. However, in 2007, the probable remains of Alexei and one of his sisters was discovered, and forensic testing a year later proved this was the case. History finally has solid proof that all Romanovs were killed in 1918.

© Getty Images

Neuschwanstein Castle was built by Ludwig II, but he died before it could be completed



WITTELSBACH

1806-1918

The House of Wittelsbach ruled in Bavaria for just over a century, but their legacy of scandals, palaces and personal dramas continue to captivate today

Words GREG KING

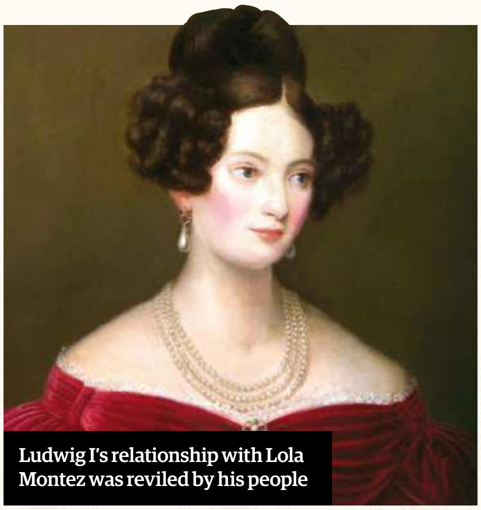
By 1806, when the Wittelsbachs came to the throne of Bavaria, they already had centuries of rule behind them as dukes and electors.

Known for being brilliant and artistic, they were among Europe's most prestigious Catholic families, linked by propitious marriages to most of the continent's other ruling houses. But they also had a reputation for wild eccentricity and even mental illness: generations of highly incestuous marriages left the last generations highly strung and prey to debilitating delusions.

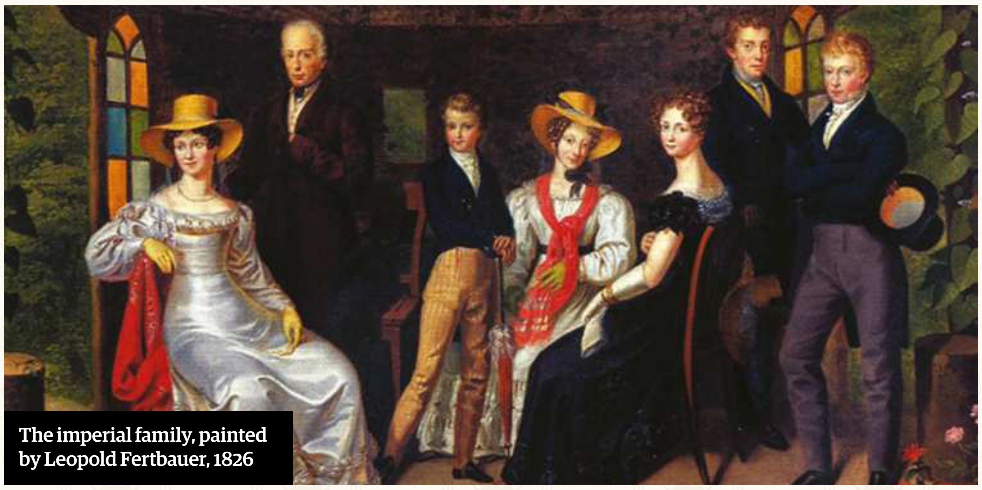
The Wittelsbachs traced their origins to the obscure aristocratic house of Scheyern, which ruled a small fiefdom at Pfaffenhofen. In 1180, Emperor Friederick Barbarossa raised Count Otto von Scheyern to the rank of duke and bestowed Bavaria, then a sparsely populated province in southern Germany, as a reward for his military loyalty. Count Otto promptly moved to a grand residence, Wittelsbach Castle, and assumed its name for his descendants.

In 1328, Duke Ludwig III became Holy Roman Emperor and soon went to war against the Vatican: Bavarian troops actually deposed the Pope when he attempted to curtail Ludwig's power. In the years that followed, advantageous marriages placed Wittelsbach descendants on the thrones of Sweden, Denmark and Norway, Bohemia, and Hungary. For its first 50 years, the Kingdom of Bavaria ranked as the third most powerful German state, after Austria and Prussia. This changed after the 1860s, when the political wars and sly machinations of Otto von Bismarck led to a Prussian-led German Empire - even so, Bavaria retained unique rights and a considerable degree of autonomy in the new Reich.

As with so many other European dynasties, it was discontent in the last days of World War I that ended Wittelsbach rule, but the family had become so beloved that they escaped the enforced exiles or revolutionary execution that befell many of their contemporaries.



Ludwig I's relationship with Lola Montez was reviled by his people



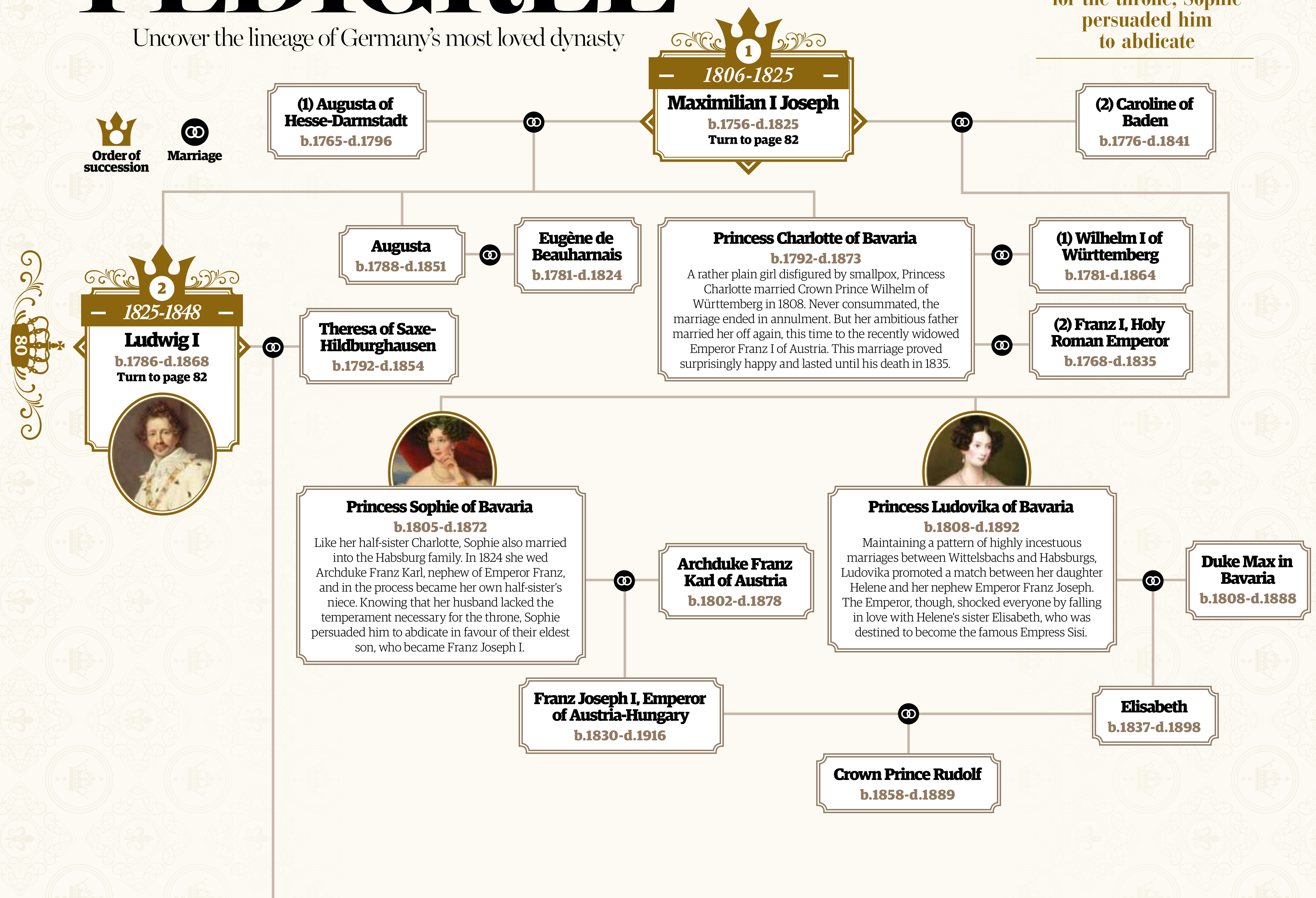
The imperial family, painted by Leopold Fertbauer, 1826

Coat of arms © Grandiose license CC BY-SA 3.0

The PEDIGREE

Uncover the lineage of Germany's most loved dynasty

> Knowing that her husband lacked the temperament necessary for the throne, Sophie persuaded him to abdicate



1806-1825
Maximilian I Joseph
b.1756-d.1825
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(1) Augusta of Hesse-Darmstadt
b.1765-d.1796

(2) Caroline of Baden
b.1776-d.1841

Augusta
b.1788-d.1851

Eugène de Beauharnais
b.1781-d.1824

1825-1848
Ludwig I
b.1786-d.1868
Turn to page 82

Theresa of Saxe-Hildburghausen
b.1792-d.1854

Princess Charlotte of Bavaria
b.1792-d.1873

A rather plain girl disfigured by smallpox, Princess Charlotte married Crown Prince Wilhelm of Württemberg in 1808. Never consummated, the marriage ended in annulment. But her ambitious father married her off again, this time to the recently widowed Emperor Franz I of Austria. This marriage proved surprisingly happy and lasted until his death in 1835.

(1) Wilhelm I of Württemberg
b.1781-d.1864

(2) Franz I, Holy Roman Emperor
b.1768-d.1835

Princess Sophie of Bavaria
b.1805-d.1872

Like her half-sister Charlotte, Sophie also married into the Habsburg family. In 1824 she wed Archduke Franz Karl, nephew of Emperor Franz, and in the process became her own half-sister's niece. Knowing that her husband lacked the temperament necessary for the throne, Sophie persuaded him to abdicate in favour of their eldest son, who became Franz Joseph I.

Archduke Franz Karl of Austria
b.1802-d.1878

Princess Ludovika of Bavaria
b.1808-d.1892

Maintaining a pattern of highly incestuous marriages between Wittelsbachs and Habsburgs, Ludovika promoted a match between her daughter Helene and her nephew Emperor Franz Joseph. The Emperor, though, shocked everyone by falling in love with Helene's sister Elisabeth, who was destined to become the famous Empress Sisi.

Duke Max in Bavaria
b.1808-d.1888

Franz Joseph I, Emperor of Austria-Hungary
b.1830-d.1916

Elisabeth
b.1837-d.1898

Crown Prince Rudolf
b.1858-d.1889

3

1848-1864

Maximilian II

b.1811-d.1864

Prim and scholarly, Maximilian II was left to clean up his father's mess. He had little of the Wittelsbach charm and even less taste for royal trappings. His sole extravagance was the restoration of Schloss Hohenschwangau near the Austrian border. Here, there were frescoes of the Grail Legend and Lohengrin, the Swan Knight, that greatly influenced the future Ludwig II.

ထ

Marie of Prussia

b.1825-d.1889

Otto of Greece

b.1815-d.1867

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Luitpold

b.1821-d.1912

Prince Luitpold served as regent for both of his nephews, Ludwig II and Otto I. A career army officer, he attempted to restore some stability to Bavaria after its uncertain rule. Ludwig II had been a popular figure; many, including Empress Elisabeth of Austria, accused Luitpold of having him murdered so that he could assume the throne in his own right.

ထ

Auguste, Archduchess of Austria

b.1825-d.1864

Princess Alexandra

b.1826-d.1875

Alexandra embodied the Wittelsbach tendency to brilliance coupled with mental instability. She authored a number of well-received books and offered German translations of contemporary works. At the same time, she went through her life firmly believing that she had once swallowed a glass piano, and avoided physical exertion that might shatter it and cause her death.

4

1864-1886

Ludwig II

b.1845-d.1886

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5

1886-1913

Otto

b.1848-d.1916

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1913-1918

Ludwig III

b.1845-d.1921

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Maria Theresa of Austria-Este

b.1849-d.1919

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Princess Therese

b.1850-d.1925

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(1) Duchess Marie Gabrielle in Bavaria

b.1878-d.1912

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Crown Prince Rupprecht

b.1869-d.1955

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(2) Princess Antonia of Luxembourg

b.1899-d.1954

Albrecht

b.1905-d.1996

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Countess Maria Draskovich of Trakostjan

b.1904-d.1969

Franz

b.1933

A cross marks the spot where Ludwig II's lifeless body was found

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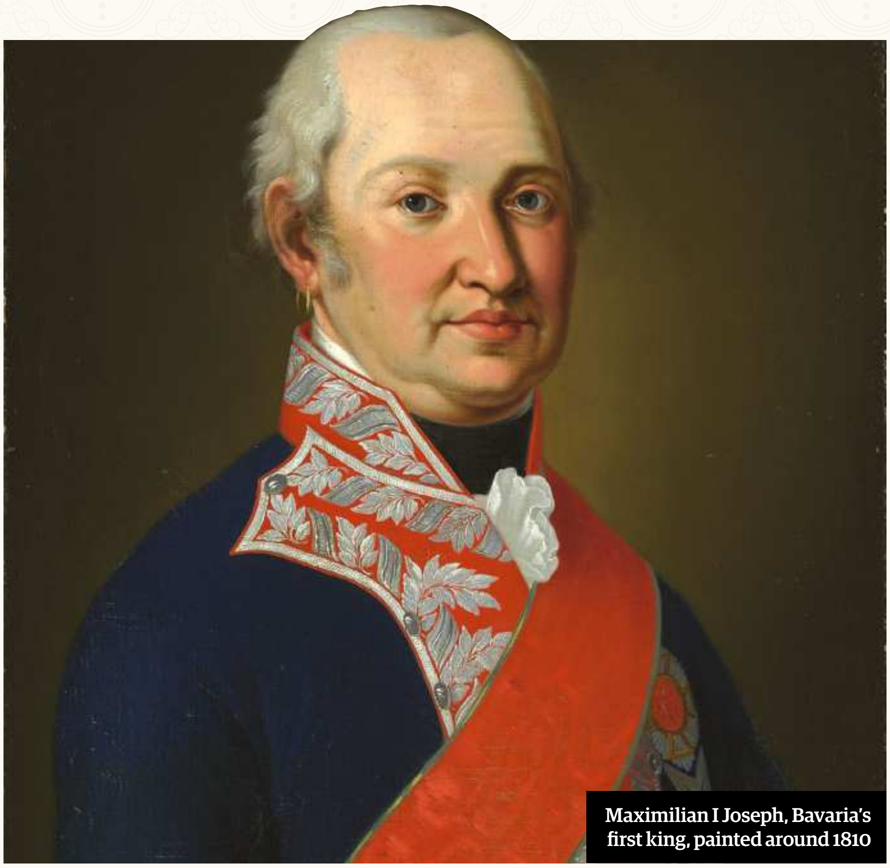


Maximilian I Joseph, Bavaria's first king, painted around 1810

Maximilian I Joseph

b.1756-d.1825 ♛ 1806-1825

Bavaria's first king

It was a forced marriage that gave Bavaria its first king. After 1800, Napoleon's Grande Armée swept across Europe, conquering and upending old alliances. Neighbouring Austria invaded Bavaria, whose ruler, Elector Maximilian IV Joseph, turned to the French upstart for assistance.

The little Corsican proposed a canny solution: if the elector's daughter Augusta married his stepson, Eugéne de Beauharnais, Napoleon would create the new Kingdom of Bavaria with Maximilian as sovereign. The elector was in no position to refuse: on 1 January 1806, he was named King Maximilian I Joseph and, two weeks later, a tearful Augusta went to the altar to cement the French alliance. Yet after Napoleon's disastrous invasion of Russia in 1812, Maximilian abruptly abandoned France and joined the ultimately victorious war against her in exchange for guarantees of his kingdom's survival.

One enduring legacy of early Napoleonic domination was Bavaria's constitution, first drafted in 1808 and amended ten years later. This established a constitutional monarchy, with a powerful parliament, freedom of the press, and religious equality.

Maximilian was a man of few pretensions but he followed royal custom by taking a string of mistresses, much to the dismay of his wife, Augusta of Hesse-Darmstadt, whom he married in 1785. Frequent pregnancies and bouts of ill health wore her down, and she died in 1796. The king wasted little time in mourning: less than 12 months after Augusta's death he wed again, this time to Princess Caroline of Baden, who was 20 years his junior. Maximilian allowed her to keep her Protestant faith – indeed, he insisted upon it as a way to demonstrate the kingdom's religious equality.

Caroline of Baden was certainly unique in royal history, providing her husband with not one but two sets of twin daughters. Maximilian I Joseph reigned for 19 years before dying of a stroke on 12 October 1825. His time on the throne had seen Bavaria rise in prestige and prosperity to become a respected modern kingdom.

Ludwig I

b.1786-d.1868 ♛ 1825-1848

A scandalous romantic

Ludwig I, who came to the Bavarian throne on his father's death in 1825, embodied many of the conflicting strains in the Wittelsbach family. He liked to think of himself as a liberal reformer and walked unguarded on the Munich streets, yet after the French Revolution of 1830, he gave in to more repressive tendencies, imposing government censorship and ruinous taxes, and rescinding freedom of the press.

The rise of the Ultramontane Party, backed by the Jesuits, in 1837 led to further public discontent as Protestants were persecuted and policies swung wildly to the right. A thwarted architect, Ludwig attempted to transform Munich into a second Athens, with grand avenues lined with neoclassical temples, triumphal arches and impressive art galleries. His obsession took a more ominous turn with his famous Schönheitengalerie (Gallery of Beauties), which featured portraits of three-dozen women who had caught Ludwig's roving eye. His queen, Therese of Saxe-Hildburghausen, took it all in her stride, at least until her husband fell under the hypnotic spell of the infamous dancer Lola Montez. The exotic Lola, who claimed aristocratic Spanish ancestry, was in fact Irish, born Eliza Gilbert. By the time she arrived in Munich in 1846, she had left behind her a wake of scandals: public love affairs, lethal duels and expulsion from a handful of European capitals amid charges of immorality. Watching her sinuous movements, Ludwig was intoxicated and he soon lost all sense of decorum in pursuing the darkly beautiful Lola. There were jewels, an expensive house, Bavarian citizenship and even an aristocratic peerage. Lola exacerbated the situation by openly interfering in Bavarian political affairs.

In February 1847 the entire Bavarian government resigned in protest over the liaison, but Ludwig learned nothing from the episode and there were frequent riots, during which Lola foolishly cheered on the mob calling for her expulsion and even showered them with chocolates and champagne. This untenable situation finally came to a head in the spring of 1848, as revolution swept Europe.

In February, after students chased Lola through the streets, the king closed the university; not to be thwarted, the angry students surrounded Lola's mansion and hurled rocks through the windows. Fearing for her life, Lola fled to Switzerland, but she urged her lover to destroy the opposition and allow her return to Munich.

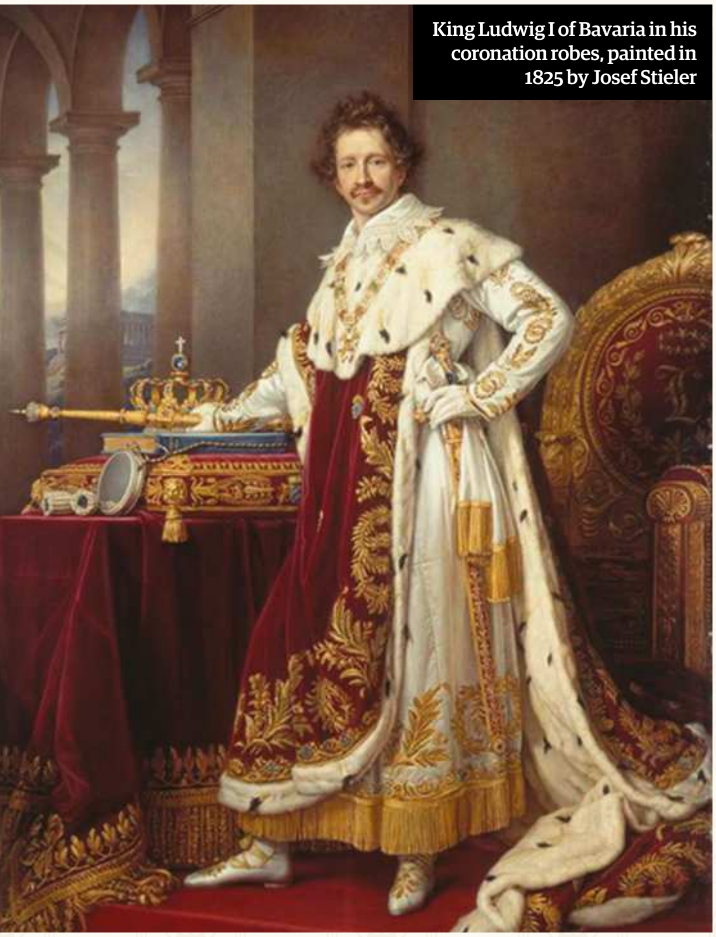
Thoroughly bewitched, Ludwig was considering these rash ideas when, on 4 March, the mob turned its vengeance on the Residenz, the Wittelsbach palace in Munich, preparing to storm the building unless the king

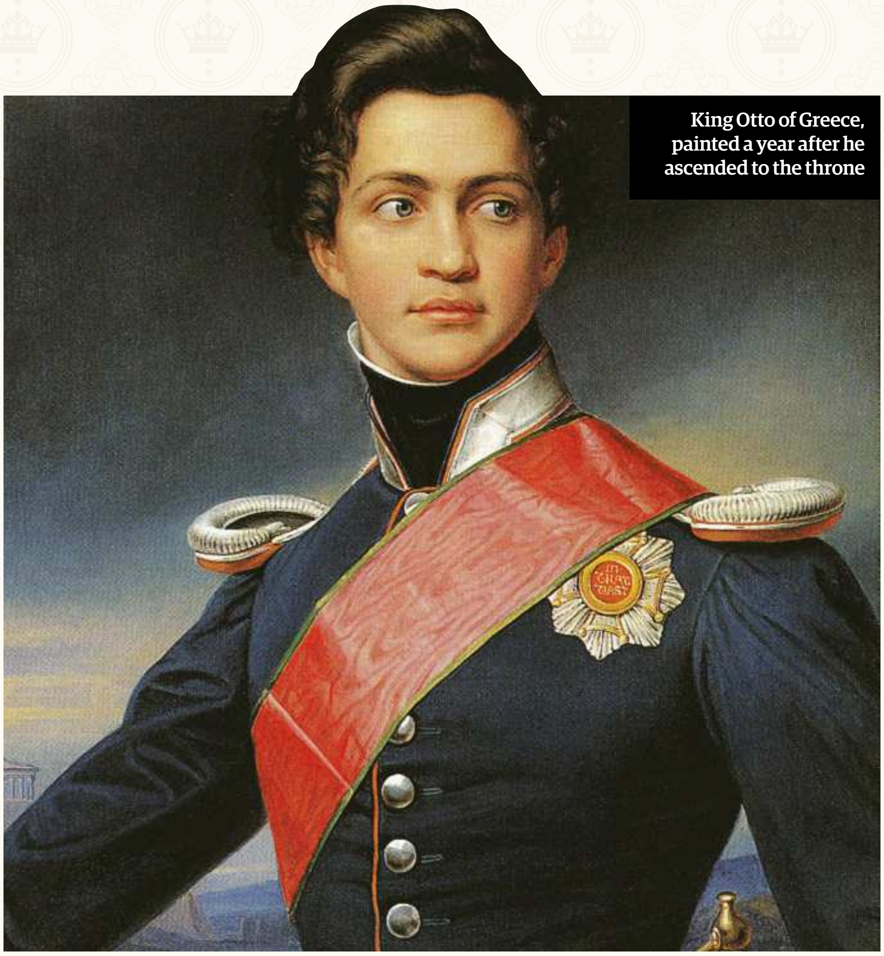
> “It was not merely public opinion that had now turned against the king”

publicly renounced his Spanish dancer. But it was not merely public opinion that had now turned against the king. His Cabinet, largely composed of those who had once been favourable to Lola, joined members of the royal family in pressing for new concessions that would hopefully diffuse the volatile situation.

Thoroughly embittered, the king refused: instead, on 20 March, he announced that he was abdicating the Bavarian throne in favour of his son, Maximilian. Lola had no use for a former king with vastly depleted financial resources, and the torrid affair quickly came to an end. Ludwig's long-suffering wife died of cholera in 1854, leaving the former king free to pursue his elderly passions without censure from the safety of his villas at Aschaffenburg and Nice. But despite the immense scandal he had caused – or perhaps because it had revealed him as a romantic – Bavaria soon forgave its wayward former monarch.

On his frequent visits to Munich he was hailed with genuine affection, and he continued to promote artistic endeavours until his death in Nice on 29 February 1868.


King Ludwig I of Bavaria in his coronation robes, painted in 1825 by Josef Stieler


King Otto of Greece, painted a year after he ascended to the throne

King Otto I of Greece

b.1815-d.1867 ♛ 1832-1862

A Bavarian king for Greece

The second son of Ludwig I, Otto found an unlikely destiny when he was offered the newly created Greek throne in 1832 by the powerful triumvirate of Great Britain, Russia and France.

Only 17 years old, the new king initially served under a regency composed of Bavarian officials who made themselves incredibly unpopular in Greece. Otto cannily rid himself of these advisers when he turned 18, but he firmly believed in autocratic rule, and his lack of tact alienated his subjects.

Hoping to win popular support, he changed his named to the more Hellenic Otho, but unrest forced him to grant his new country a constitution in 1843. Although he transferred the capital to Athens and promoted Greek culture, he refused to abandon his Catholic faith, which led many of his Orthodox subjects to regard him as a heretic. He did further damage by wedding a German princess, Amalia of Oldenburg, and holding the wedding not in Athens but in her father's dukedom. Not only did she retain her own Lutheran faith, but the lack of an heir throughout the marriage did nothing to endear Greece to its foreign sovereigns.

Otto was hamstrung in efforts to alleviate poverty and improve Greece's standing, as Russia, Great Britain and France effectively controlled internal policies in their guise as official protectors. The king's inability to resist British blockades in 1850 and 1854 did even more harm to Otto's prestige in the eyes of his people.

By 1862 the Greeks had had enough: there was a failed assassination attempt against the queen, and Otto's subjects took advantage of his absence from the capital to stage a coup. The king attempted to mount a response, but by this time the three Great Powers were tired of his unstable rule and refused to support him. Otto and Amalia fled the country and returned to Bavaria in disgrace. Otto lived in lavish, if obscure, surroundings until his death in 1867.

Ludwig II

b.1845-d.1886 ♛ 1864-1886

Bavaria's famous fairy tale king

"I want to remain an eternal enigma," Ludwig II once confessed. In 1864, at the age of 18, Ludwig II came to the Bavarian throne: he was tall, thin and strikingly handsome, with an almost feminine beauty that set hearts aflutter across Munich.

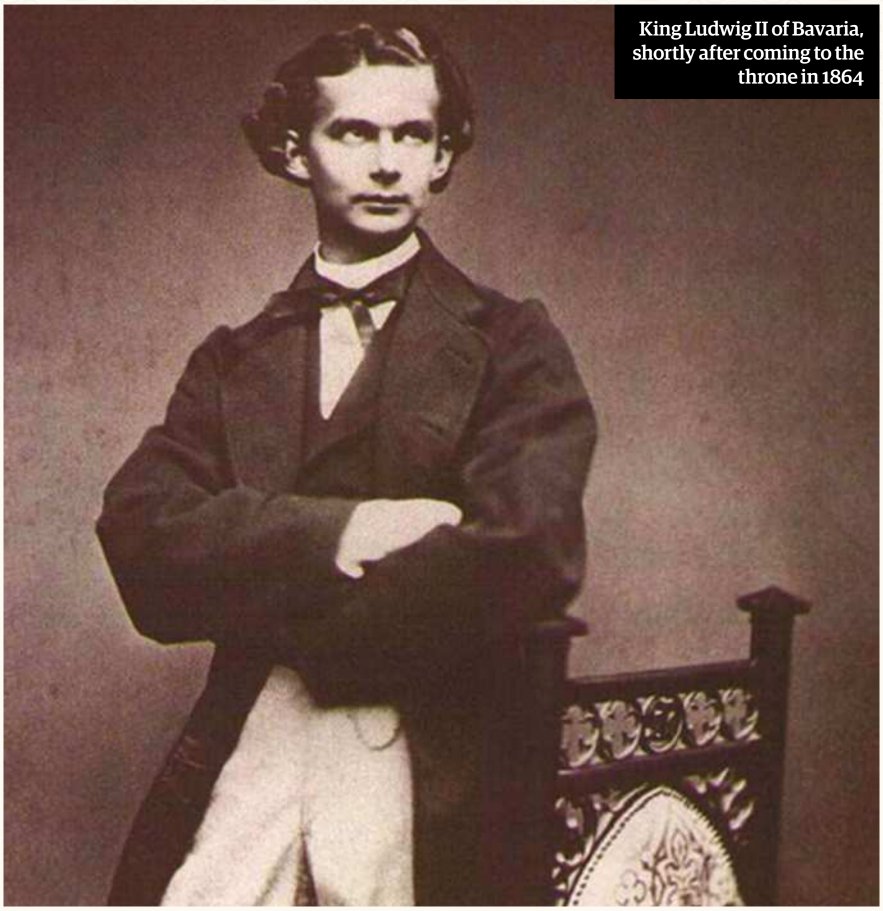
A romantic at heart, he had fallen under the spell of Richard Wagner's sensuous opera, and one of his first acts on the throne was to summon the controversial composer to Munich. Ludwig showered him with privileges but Wagner's affair with Liszt's daughter, Cosima von Bülow, attempts to interfere in politics, and incessant financial demands eventually forced the king to send him into exile, although he continued to fund work on the composer's great *Der Ring des Nibelungen*.

In 1866, Bavaria joined Austria in a futile war against Prussia; in 1870, Bavaria was forced to join Prussia in a war against France. Prussia emerged victorious and formed the new German Empire. Ludwig remained king but his independence was lost. He became embittered and withdrawn, especially after his disastrous engagement to Princess Sophie, sister of Empress Elisabeth of Austria, faltered when the homosexual Ludwig repeatedly postponed the wedding. He began a series of affairs with stable boys and handsome soldiers, which horrified his conservative government. Worse, Ludwig practically withdrew from all of his royal duties and used these young men to communicate with ministers.

Increasingly, the king hid himself away in his fantastic buildings: Neuschwanstein, his shimmering Alpine castle adorned with frescoes of Wagnerian legends; Linderhof, a Rococo villa whose grounds include an artificial grotto and Moorish Kiosk; and Herrenchiemsee, a virtual and extravagant replica of Versailles, where the king could live out his fascination with the Ancien Régime. And by 1886 there were plans for even more buildings: a Chinese Palace in the Alps, another Gothic castle, and even a Byzantine palace of marble and gold. Such ideas horrified the government: Ludwig was some 20 million marks in debt. When they refused him additional funds, the king threatened to dismiss his ministers.

Prime Minister Johann von Lutz used the king's bizarre personal behaviour to justify a coup: Ludwig's brother and heir Otto had already been declared insane, and now a government commission asserted that the king was also suffering from an incurable mental illness. This rested on the opinion of several psychiatrists, none of whom had ever examined Ludwig. But armed with a medical report, and the agreement of Ludwig's cunning uncle, Prince Luitpold, to assume the regency, the government dispatched agents to arrest Ludwig. They found him on the night of 10 June 1886, ensconced in his still-incomplete Neuschwanstein; initially repelled by loyal troops, they struck again early on the morning of 12 June, seizing the king and transporting him to a heavily guarded castle, Berg, on the shore of Lake Starnberg.

Despite the rain, the following evening Dr Bernhard von Gudden, the king's psychiatrist, agreed to accompany Ludwig on a walk. The two men never returned: four hours later, their bodies were found floating in the lake. The government quickly declared that the insane Ludwig had strangled his doctor and then killed himself, but many questioned this official version. There were rumours of a botched rescue attempt organised by Ludwig's cousin Empress Elisabeth of Austria, and even widespread tales of murder at the hands of unknown agents, who viewed the former king as a threat to the continued existence of Lutz's government. Ludwig had become an embarrassment, and his death eliminated the threat of a civil war. The mystery remains, only adding to the mythology that still surrounds Bavaria's fabled dream king.


King Ludwig II of Bavaria, shortly after coming to the throne in 1864

> "There were rumours of a botched rescue attempt"

Otto, Bavaria's insane king, photographed when he was still a young prince

Otto I

b.1848-d.1916 ♔ Titular king under regency 1886-1913

An insane monarch

Bavaria's next king, Otto, reigned but never actually ruled. Until 1870 he had been a charming, genial young man, interested only in soldiers and women. But he soon fell victim to a deadly combination of Wittelsbach eccentricity coupled with the mental instability that ran in his mother's Prussian family. At times he refused to eat and sleep for days, spoke in gibberish, and avoided bathing.

His brother Ludwig II had him locked away at Nymphenburg Palace under the care of Dr Bernhard von Gudden, but in 1865 Otto escaped, stormed into a cathedral during mass and loudly began confessing his sins before officials could drag him away. A harsher regime was imposed as Otto continued to deteriorate: when Ludwig II visited his brother, he sadly wrote that Otto "seems to grow worse every day… He behaves like a madman, makes terrible faces, barks like a dog and sometimes says the most indecent things."

Otto had been locked away at Fürstenried Castle for three years when Ludwig II was deposed; although he was granted the title of king, control of the government lay in the hands of his uncle Prince Luitpold, who served as regent.

When Luitpold died in 1912, his son Ludwig assumed the regency, but it was obvious that Otto could never reign. The Bavarian parliament therefore passed a new law, allowing the end of the regency if the monarch was deemed incapable of ruling for a period of ten years.

The next day, the former regent assumed the throne as King Ludwig III. As a courtesy, Otto was allowed to retain his title, but by this time he spent his days smashing flies against the windows of his cell, largely forgotten by the world beyond until his death on 11 October 1916.

Ludwig III

b.1845-d.1921 ♔ Regent 1912-1913, king 1913-1918

Bavaria's most unpopular monarch

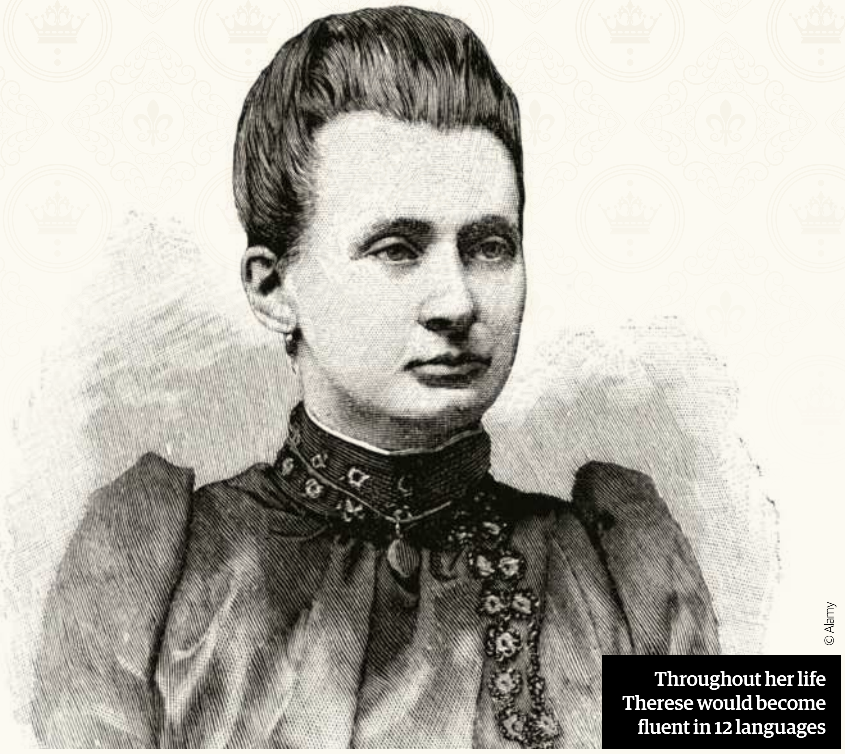
Luitpold's eldest son took over the ongoing regency for Otto on his father's death in 1912, but he assumed the throne in his own right as Ludwig III in November 1913 when the Bavarian parliament passed a new law that allowed for the deposition of a sovereign if they could not reign for more than ten years. Although few Bavarians had strong feelings for poor insane Otto, many derided the move as a craven power grab.

This, along with a perception that Ludwig III was too accommodating toward Prussia, did nothing to enhance his popularity. He tried to live quietly with his wife, the former Archduchess Maria Theresa of Austria-Este, enjoying country estates at Sárvár in Hungary and Eiwanowitz in Moravia, which her immense fortune provided, and indulging their brood of 13 children.

Ludwig III, however, was unable to escape the trauma of World War I, when his soldiers marched off with the kaiser's army in the bloodiest conflict the world had ever witnessed. Food shortages, mounting casualties and devastating inflation further inflamed Bavarian discontent: on 3 November 1918, mass demonstrations swept Munich, demanding peace and an end to the constitutional monarchy.

Four days later, Ludwig and his family fled across the border to Austria, where they found refuge at Schloss Anif near Salzburg. It was there, on 13 November, that Ludwig issued a declaration announcing that he had found it "impossible to continue my rule." He formally released all Bavarian officials and soldiers from their oaths of loyalty to him: this was not technically an abdication but it effectively ended Wittelsbach rule as the People's State of Bavaria was formally proclaimed. Ludwig remained in exile, fearing possible assassination, but in April 1920 - a year after his wife's death - he finally returned to Bavaria, living quietly at a country estate with his children. He died on 18 October 1921 while visiting his estate in Hungary.

Ludwig III, Bavaria's last king



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Throughout her life Therese would become fluent in 12 languages

Princess Therese

b.1850-d.1925

A modern princess trapped in a 19th-century world

One of the most remarkable members of the House of Wittelsbach, Princess Therese held no power and wielded no influence, yet she left an indelible legacy.

The only daughter of Prince Regent Luitpold, she had shown her brilliance early, mastering six languages by the age of 12; she later added another six, including Greek and Russian. In an age when princesses were expected to be ornamental, not intellectual, Therese stood out for her achievements. She was fascinated by science, and studied botany, geology, anthropology and zoology at the hands of private tutors – the conventions of the time forbade any princess from attending recognised institutions of higher learning.

Therese did not allow the lack of a university education to impede her relentless thirst for knowledge. She independently studied complicated mathematics and developed a taste for travel, crossing the globe in a search for interesting botanical specimens. These weren't pleasure trips. Therese often travelled to dangerous and far-flung corners of the Earth: among her expeditions were visits to the forests of Brazil; the wilds of North America; exotic Mexico; the Caribbean; and South America, where she crossed the Andes mountains by llama. Everything she encountered was noted in a journal and photographed, with samples collected and carefully packed to be sent back to Munich.

She used her adventures as the basis for a number of books: *Excursion to Tunis* (1880); *Impressions and Sketches from Russia* (1885); *Over the Polar Ice* (1889); *My Trips in the Brazilian Tropics* (1897); and *Study Trips to the Western Part of South America* (1908), all published under the pseudonym of Th. V. Bayer. In 1892 she became the first woman ever awarded honorary membership in the Bavarian Academy of Sciences and Humanities, and in 1897 she was given an honourary doctorate from the Ludwig Maximilian University. Therese spent her last years as an active member of the Berlin Entomological Society.

After her death in 1925, her collections were donated to the State Museum of Ethnology in Munich.

Crown Prince Rupprecht

b.1869-d.1955

♛ Titular Head of the House of Wittelsbach 1921-1955

Bavaria's last crown prince

The eldest son of King Ludwig III, Crown Prince Rupprecht never reigned, though he carried both the Wittelsbach inheritance as well as the Jacobite claim to the British and Scottish Crowns (Rupprecht was a direct descendant of King Charles I's daughter Henrietta).

Denied any political role, he spent his long life largely focused on his family. This should have brought joy, but circumstances conspired against the traditional happy ending. Rupprecht lost his first wife, Duchess Marie Gabrielle in Bavaria, from kidney disease in 1912, leaving him to care for their surviving son Albrecht; four other children had predeceased their mother.

During World War I the prince served as a Field Marshal in the German Army, watching impotently as the old

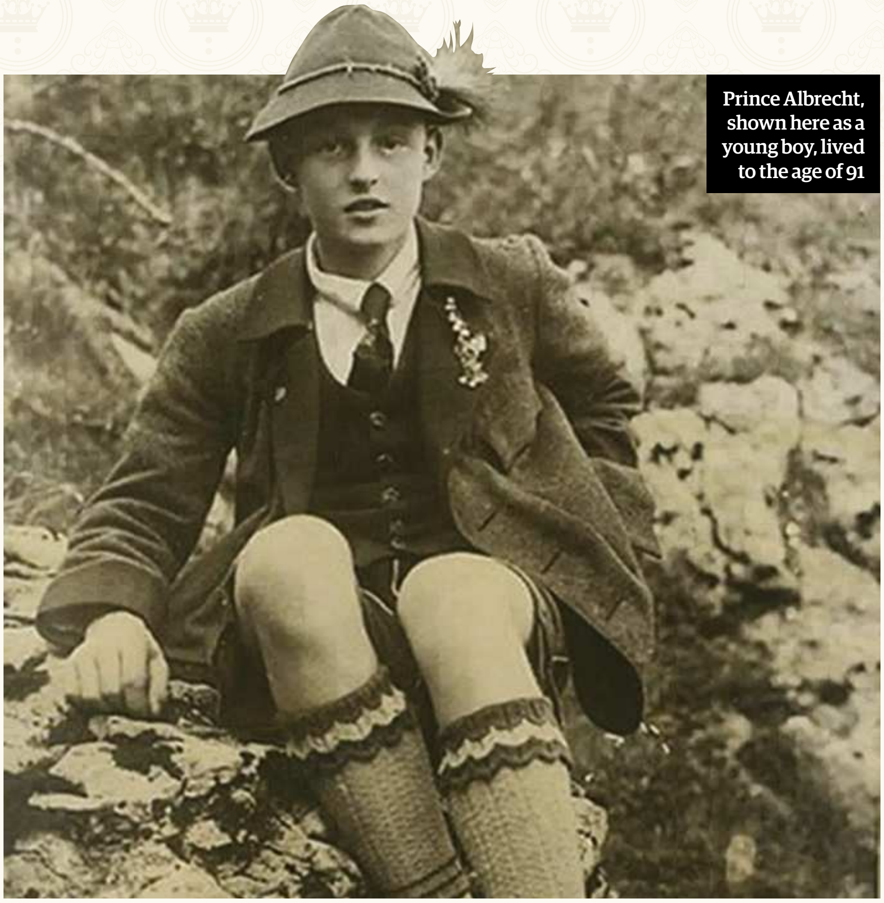
Prince Rupprecht was an avid opposer of Hitler and went into exile during World War II order crumbled around him. When revolution erupted in November 1918, his father was powerless to resist the demands for change. It is doubtful that, had Ludwig III abdicated in favour of his son, Rupprecht would have fared any better in saving the Wittelsbach throne.

He was now a former crown prince, forced to adjust to a new, previously unsuspected world. Desperate for some measure of personal happiness, Rupprecht now fought to marry again, having fallen in love with Princess Antonia of Luxembourg. There was much opposition to the match, particularly in the former Allied press, and the couple had to wait until 1921 before bitter resentments over World War I had faded enough to allow the union. This second marriage produced another son, Heinrich, and five daughters: Irmingard, Editha, Hilda, Gabrielle and Sophie.

A decade of happiness followed, but then the gathering clouds of Hitler's Third Reich spread across Germany. Rupprecht had been an early - and vocal - opponent of Hitler, having helped suppress support for his aborted Beer Hall Putsch. The Führer had a fascination with members of Germany's former royal families: adding their support would add prestige to his regime. He tried to win Rupprecht over, even offering to restore the Wittelsbach throne, but Rupprecht loathed Hitler and once confessed to King George V that he thought the Chancellor was insane. In 1939 the Nazis seized the family's Schloss Leutstetten, and Rupprecht and his family fled to Italy.

There were constant fears of kidnapping and assassination while they lived in Rome. After the failed June 1944 von Stauffenberg plot against Hitler, the Führer decided that Rupprecht must have been involved. Gestapo agents couldn't locate the crown prince, but Antonia and Irmingard weren't as lucky. Antonia was arrested and sent to Sachsenhausen concentration camp as a political prisoner; a few months later, Irmingard was also transferred to Sachsenhausen. These were desperate, dangerous times, with cholera and starvation widespread in the freezing barracks. Things grew worse in early 1945, when the Nazis moved mother and daughter to Dachau. Antonia had been the favourite victim of a particularly vicious camp official, who injected her with high amounts of morphine and then forced her to march for hours on end through the snow. Rupprecht had no word of his family, and Antonia's sister, Grand Duchess Charlotte of Luxembourg, made repeated pleas for her release but to no avail.

It was only on 30 April 1945 that the American Third Army captured Dachau and liberated its prisoners. Antonia was barely alive: she weighed less than 41 kilograms (90 pounds). By this time Rupprecht had returned to Bavaria, flown in on a special military transport arranged by General Dwight Eisenhower, Commander of the European Theatre of Operations. He managed to reclaim the formerly confiscated Schloss Leutstetten but his wife refused to live in Germany and sought refuge in Switzerland, never again to regain her health. Rupprecht visited her often before her death in 1954. Bavaria's last crown prince survived his second wife by just 16 months, dying on 2 August 1955 at the age of 86.



Prince Albrecht, shown here as a young boy, lived to the age of 91

Prince Albrecht

b.1905-d.1996

Titular Head of the House of Wittelsbach 1955-1996

The pretender and his heirs

Rupprecht's only surviving son from his first marriage, Albrecht never carried the title of crown prince, though legitimists recognised him as head of the House of Wittelsbach. Unfortunately for the Wittelsbach cause, Albrecht married for love, not for dynastic purposes.

In 1930, he wed Countess Maria Draskovich of Trakostjan. The bride was from an aristocratic Croatian family (indeed, she was a direct descendant of Napoleon's second wife Empress Marie Louise) but she was not royal. The union was therefore deemed to be morganatic: the venerable *Almanach de Gotha*, which chronicled the lineage and unions of royals and aristocrats, pointedly noted that any children born to the marriage would be ineligible to succeed as titular head of the House of Wittelsbach.

After 15 years, though, Rupprecht reversed his initial decision and declared that the marriage was valid for the purposes of succession. This won howls of derision from critics, but a court ruled that Rupprecht, as undoubted head of the house, was within his rights to amend the dynastic laws and marital regulations as he saw fit. The decision thus allowed Albrecht's sons to carry on the hereditary Wittelsbach line. Albrecht lived quietly at Schloss Berg until his death in 1996 at the age of 91. His eldest son Franz, born in 1933, then assumed headship of the house, but this added another complication: Franz has never married.

His heir, therefore, is his younger brother Max Emanuel. Max is married but has only daughters: by tradition, the Wittelsbachs followed a semi-Salic law, which dictated that women could inherit the throne (or, in this case, headship of the house) only after all eligible males. This means that, on Max's death, the Wittelsbach line will pass not to his direct descendants but rather to his first cousin Prince Luitpold and then to the latter's son, Prince Ludwig Heinrich of Bavaria.

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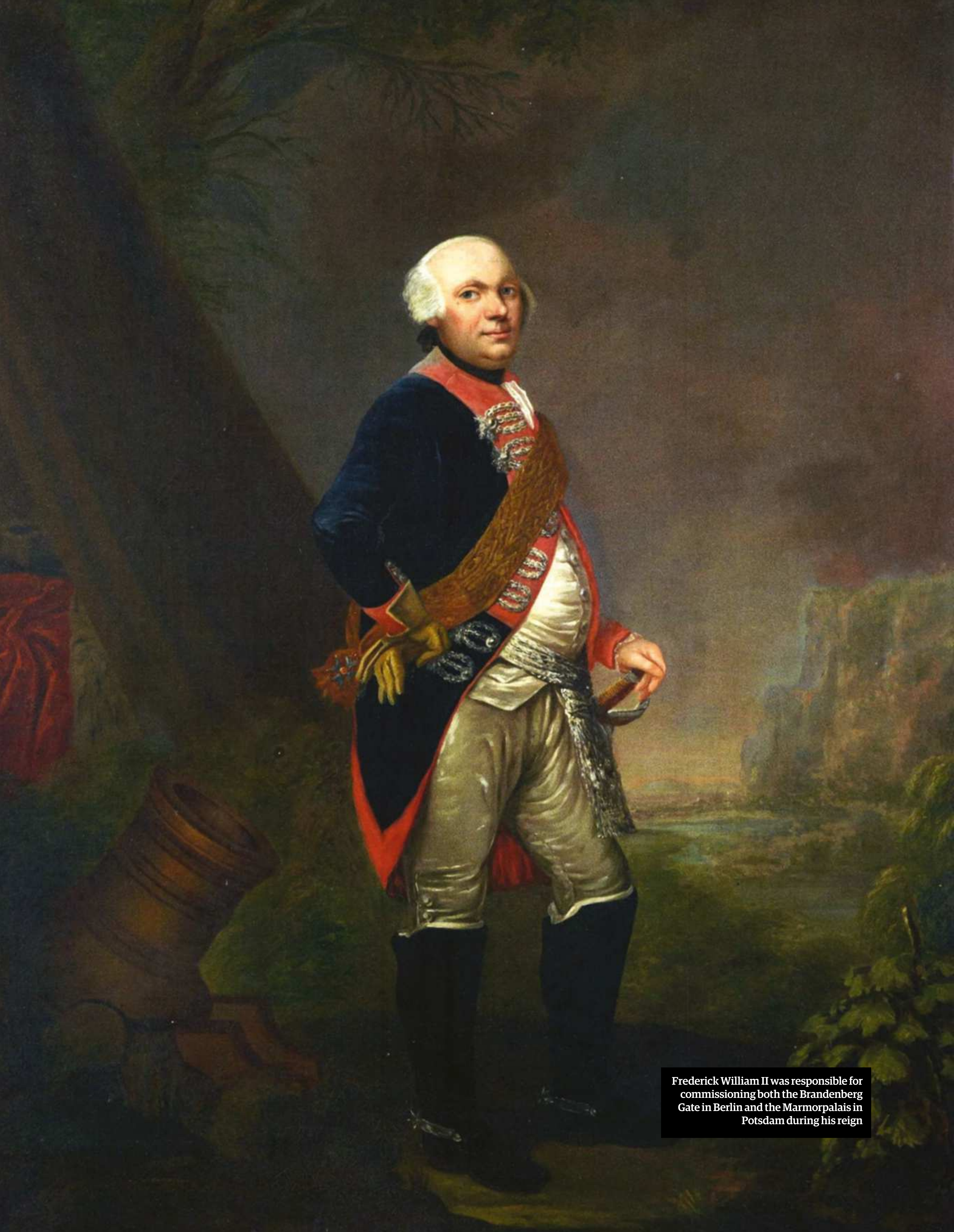


Frederick William II was responsible for commissioning both the Brandenberg Gate in Berlin and the Marmorpalais in Potsdam during his reign

HOHENZOLLERN

1701-1918

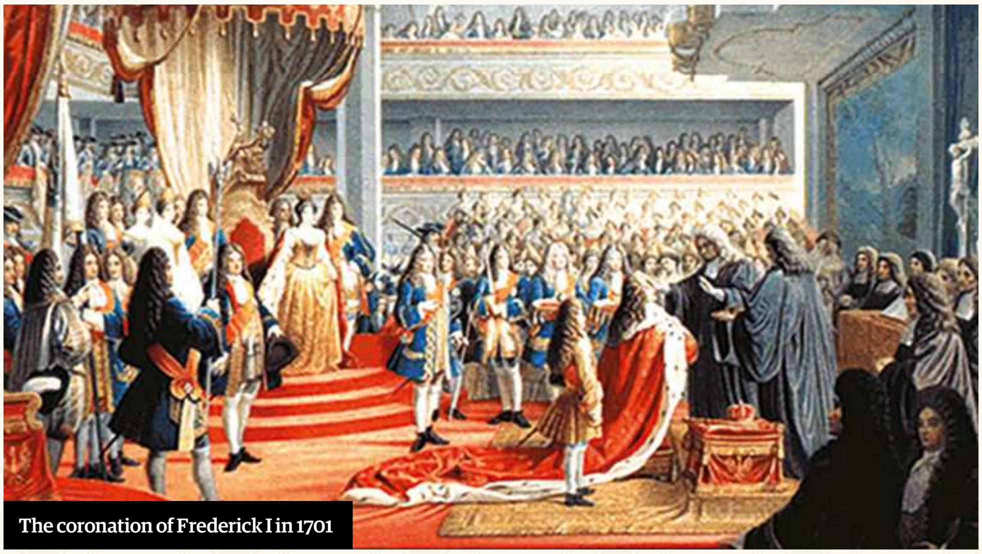
From relatively modest beginnings, this prolific dynasty rose to rule a united German empire, and beyond

Words CHARLIE GINGER & ROSS HAMILTON

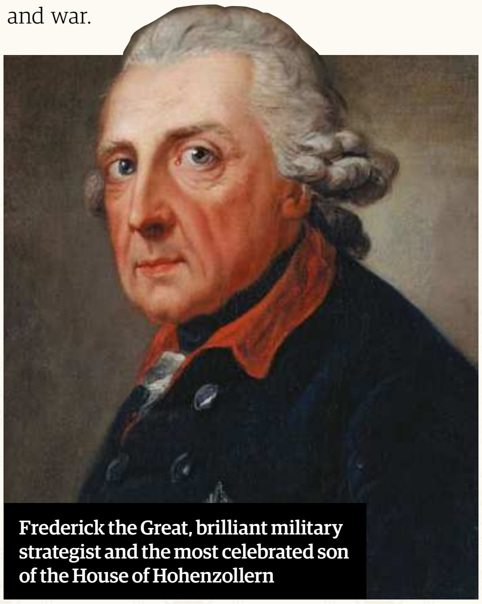
Taking its name from the imposing Hohenzollern Castle ('zoller' means watchtower) that sits astride a Swabian mountain, the House of Hohenzollern was founded prior to 1061, with the first members of the house being mentioned before this date.

Climbing to a position of influence near the town of Hechingen in southwest Germany, the family's first recorded ancestor was Burkhard I, Count of Zollern, of whom little is known save that his paternity has never been confirmed and that he was slain as the result of a feud. Yet while the origins of this Germanic dynasty are shrouded in mystery, what is beyond doubt is the far-reaching influence of the House of Hohenzollern. It would come to rule not only the location of its birth but also Brandenburg and Prussia after its establishment in 1701. The Hohenzollern dynasty would also go on to control the German Empire upon its foundation in 1871 following Prussia's stunning defeat of France in the Franco-Prussian War and later Germany's overseas colonies in Africa and the state of Romania.

The dynasty's lasting influence is all the more remarkable given that it split along religious lines into two separate branches - one Protestant and the other Catholic - long before it came to rule the fledgling nation of Germany. However, it couldn't survive the unprecedented upheaval that followed the empire's crushing defeat in World War I. With Wilhelm II's disasterous rule, the Hohenzollerns lost their grip on imperial power, and the German monarchy was abolished, leaving in its wake a power vacuum that birthed struggle, strife - and war.



The coronation of Frederick I in 1701



Frederick the Great, brilliant military strategist and the most celebrated son of the House of Hohenzollern

The PEDIGREE

A prolific and highly influential dynasty, the Hohenzollerns count Prussian kings, Greek queens and Russian empresses among their numbers

♛ Order of succession

⚭ Marriage

Hohenzollern Castle, south of Stuttgart, is the imperial seat of the dynasty, though none of the Kaisers lived there

© Alamy

1
1701-1713
Frederick I
b.1657-d.1713
Turn to page 92

⚭

Sophia Charlotte of Hanover
b.1668-d.1705

2
1713-1740
Frederick William I
b.1688-d.1740
Known as the Soldier King, Frederick reformed his army, government and finances.

⚭

Sophia Dorothea of Hanover
b.1687-d.1757

Frederick Louis
b.1707-d.1708

Wilhelmine of Prussia, Margravine of Brandenburg-Bayreuth
b.1709-d.1758
Though her marriage to Frederick, Margrave of Brandenburg-Bayreuth wasn't advantageous, Wilhelmine helped him to transform her new home with ambitious architectural projects.

3
1740-1786
Frederick II the Great
b.1712-d.1786
Turn to page 92

⚭

Elisabeth Christine of Brunswick-Wolfenbuttel-Bevern
b.1715-d.1797

Frederica Louise
b.1714-d.1784

Philippine Charlotte
b.1716-d.1801

Sophia Dorothea
b.1719-d.1765

Louisa Ulrika
b.1720-d.1782
Turn to page 93

Augustus William
b.1722-d.1758

⚭

Luise of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel
b.1722-d.1780

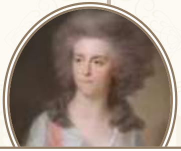
Anna Amalia
b.1723-d.1787

Prince Henry of Prussia
b.1726-d.1802
The second youngest of Frederick William I's children, Henry enjoyed a distinguished career in the Prussian military. A number of records suggest that the popular prince was at one point sounded out as a potential president or king of the fledgling United States, though he was apparently disinclined.

Augustus Ferdinand
b.1730-d.1813

Hohenzollern

Henry
b.1747-d.1767



Wilhelmina of Prussia, Princess of Orange
b.1751-d.1820
Turn to page 94

4
1786-1797
Frederick William II
b.1744-d.1797
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∞

Frederika Louisa of Hesse-Darmstadt
b.1751-d.1805

Louis
b.1773-d.1796

Frederika Louisa Wilhelmina
b.1774-d.1837

Augusta
b.1780-d.1841

Henry
b.1781-d.1846

William
b.1783-d.1851

5
1797-1840
Frederick William III
b.1770-d.1840
Widely regarded as a weak ruler, Frederick William III's naïve wish to maintain neutrality saw Prussia initially devastated during the Napoleonic Wars.

∞

Louise of Mecklenburg-Strelitz
b.1776-d.1810

6
1840-1861
Frederick William IV
b.1795-d.1861
A romantic and a conservative, Frederick William IV could have been the first Emperor of the Germans, but he rejected the offer as he believed it to be illegitimate.

∞

Elisabeth Ludovica of Bavaria
b.1801-d.1873

7
1861-1888
William I
b.1797-d.1888
Turn to page 95

∞

Augusta of Saxe Weimar
b.1811-d.1890
Turn to page 96

Charlotte of Prussia (Alexandra Feodorovna)
b.1798-d.1860
Born Charlotte, she later became Alexandra Feordorovna, Empress of Russia following her marriage to the future Tsar Nicholas I. Not known for her political opinions or ambitions, she spent much of her time reading and at lavish social events.

Charles
b.1801-d.1883

Alexandrine
b.1803-d.1892

Louise
b.1808-d.1870

Albert
b.1809-d.1872

8
1888
Frederick III
b.1831-d.1888
Turn to page 96

∞

Victoria
b.1840-d.1901

Louise
b.1838-d.1923

9
1888-1918
Wilhelm II
b.1859-d.1941
Turn to page 97

∞

Augusta Victoria of Schleswig-Holstein
b.1858-d.1921

Charlotte
b.1860-d.1919

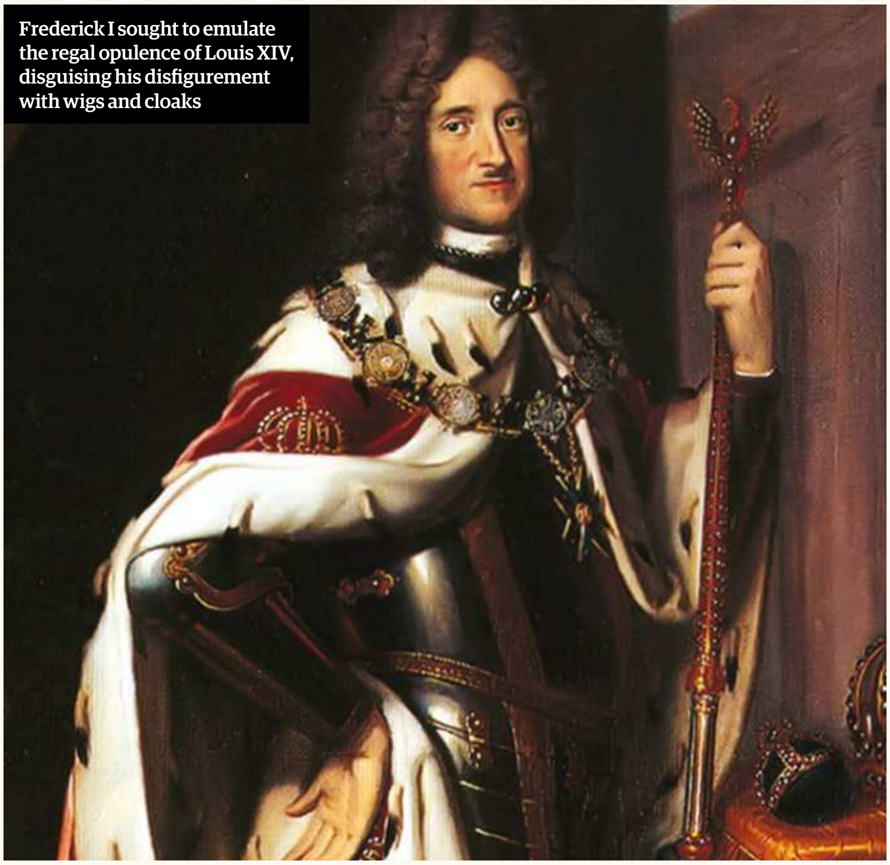
Henry
b.1862-d.1929

Viktoria
b.1866-d.1929

Waldemar
b.1868-d.1879

Sophia of Prussia
b.1870-d.1932
Granddaughter of Queen Victoria and wife of Constantine I of Greece, Sophia was queen of the Hellenes during one of the most turbulent periods of the region's history.

Margaret
b.1872-d.1954



Frederick I sought to emulate the regal opulence of Louis XIV, disguising his disfigurement with wigs and cloaks

Frederick I

b.1657-d.1713 ♛ Duke of Prussia: 1688-1701, King: 1701-1713

The first King

Before Frederick I, the Hohenzollerns had been counts, dukes, margraves and electors of their lands in central Europe, but never kings. Indeed, before Frederick I gained the title of king for himself, he'd been Frederick III, Elector of Brandenburg and Duke of Prussia, much as his ancestors had been.

Nevertheless, Frederick desired more. Perhaps motivated in part by a feeling of physical inferiority - an accident had left him humpbacked - he sought to elevate himself and his house to a status beyond that of a mere vassal of the Holy Roman Empire. In 1701, after more than 20 years as elector, he got his wish. Through negotiations with Emperor Leopold I, Frederick was finally granted a crown - though it came with caveats.

The territory ruled by the house of Hohenzollern at this point constituted the regions of both Prussia and Brandenburg: the former a German state with ties to Poland and the latter a margraviate of the Holy Roman Empire. Tradition said that there could be only three kings in the empire, and diplomacy suggested that installing one on what was partially Polish soil would be unnecessarily provocative. Frederick's solution was, surprisingly, semantic: he would be king in Prussia, not king of Prussia. A small but important distinction that, for the most part, kept everyone happy.

Frederick would rule for another 12 years, spending most of his time at court in the new capital, Berlin. Seeking to imitate the magnificence of his French counterpart, Louis XIV, the city quickly became a hub of luxury and artistic excellence - a smaller, more easterly Versailles. Though often at odds with France, against which Prussia fought in the War of Spanish Succession, Frederick was besotted with French language, culture and fashion. He would live out his days in lavish, Francophile surroundings, but his lasting contribution to history was the title he acquired, and bestowed upon his descendants.

Frederick II The Great

b.1712-d.1786 ♛ 1740-1786

The father of Prussia

The history of the House of Hohenzollern stretches back for nearly a millennium, but there is no doubt as to who is its most famous son. Frederick II, king in and later of Prussia, is the only one of the country's monarchs to be known instantly by his cognomen - Frederick the Great; a title as ostentatious as it is apposite.

The embodiment of 'enlightened absolutism', Frederick the Great inherited a Prussia that was in the ascendency and transformed it into the premier military power in Europe. His achievements encompassed brilliant campaigns, wide-ranging social and economic reforms and astute diplomacy that would both enrich and expand his country. Frederick's promotion of religious toleration and extensive patronage of the arts also helped calcify his reputation as a forward-thinking autocrat and a champion of rational thought.

There was a time, however, when it appeared that Frederick may never acquire the position that he would later come to epitomise. As crown prince, his relationship with his father, Frederick William I, was confrontational and frequently violent. The young Frederick's intellectual and artistic inclinations, not to mention his maturing homosexuality, clashed with his father's deeply combative sensibilities, and the 'Solider King' often made life hell for his son. This cruelty reached its nadir when an 18-year-old Frederick was caught attempting to abscond to Britain with Hans Hermann von Katte, a Prussian army lieutenant and alleged lover of the prince. In response, Frederick William I had the pair locked up and accused of treason. Frederick would ultimately be released, but not before he was forced to watch his companion beheaded.

As much as this toxic paternal relationship harmed Frederick during his early years, he did benefit greatly from his father's other great endowment: the Prussian army. A famous quote goes: "Other states possess an army; Prussia is an army in possession of a state," and while there's no questioning Frederick the Great's status as a brilliant military commander, he was certainly fortunate to be in possession of the most formidable fighting force in Europe.

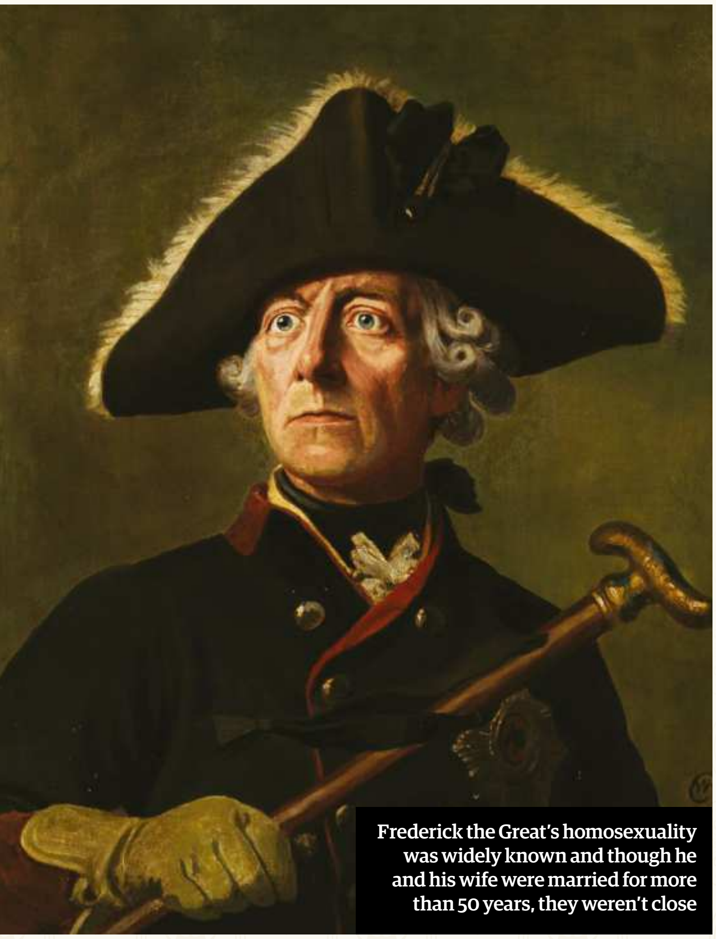
His successful campaigns in the War of Austrian Succession and the European theatre of the Seven Years' War cemented his status as an outstanding general, though in truth he came close to catastrophic defeat in the latter. Between his military endeavours, Frederick spent much of his time at Sanssouci, the magnificent Rococo palace he had built in Potsdam. It was there that he mixed with artists and Enlightenment philosophers, wrote extensively on politics and statecraft, and drew up

“Frederick was released and forced to watch his companion beheaded”

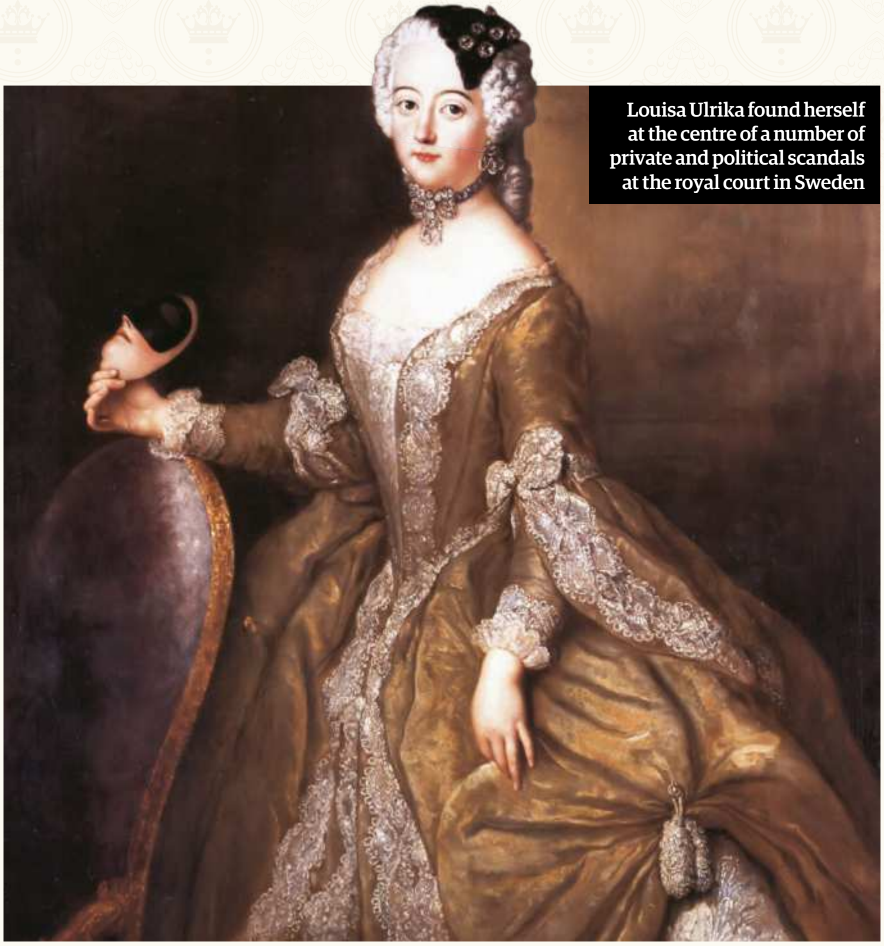
ambitious domestic policies. And it was there that, at the age of 74, ‘Old Fritz’ died at peace, far away from battle.

In his lifetime, Frederick was already lauded as one of the great leaders of his age, but in the years following his death, he acquired an almost mythic status. When Napoleon Bonaparte marched into Berlin 20 years later, the French emperor made a point of paying his respects at the king’s tomb at Sanssouci, reportedly remarking to his assembled troops, “If this man were still alive I would not be here.” Adolf Hitler too, drew comparisons between himself and Frederick the Great. During the Allied bombing campaign on Germany, Hitler even had Frederick’s body moved to the safety of a salt mine.

While these associations with German nationalism did much to tarnish Frederick’s reputation in the 20th century, more recent re-evaluations have begun to acknowledge his role in the proliferation of Enlightenment ideals. His character will likely be challenged and reviewed for centuries to come. His greatness, however, will remain undisputed.



Frederick the Great’s homosexuality was widely known and though he and his wife were married for more than 50 years, they weren’t close



Louisa Ulrika found herself at the centre of a number of private and political scandals at the royal court in Sweden

Louisa Ulrika

b.1720-d.1782 ♛ Queen Consort of Sweden: 1751-1771

Queen of intrigue

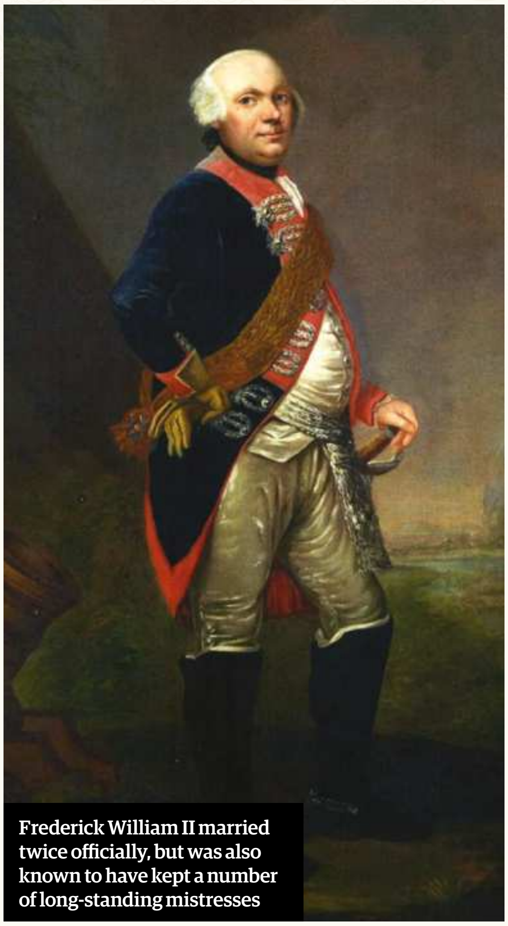
From an early age, Louisa Ulrika of Prussia distinguished herself as intelligent, beautiful and ferociously ambitious. The daughter of Frederick William I, she grew up in a Prussian court that was among Europe’s most exciting. Counting eminent minds among her friends, she entered into what would be a protracted search for marriage.

The match finally came in the form of the genial but weak-willed Adolf Frederick, then-Crown Prince of Sweden. Despite Louisa’s brother, Frederick the Great, advocating for a different pairing, ostensibly for fear that the domineering Louisa would exert too much influence over her husband-to-be, the two wed in 1744.

Frederick’s reservations soon proved justified. Louisa’s arrival in Sweden marked the beginning of decades of manoeuvring and manipulation that placed her as the prime force behind the country’s ruling family. The Princess found a Swedish monarchy that was, in her eyes, severely lacking in political authority; its formerly absolute power now shackled by governmental constraints. With Adolf Frederick the heir, she was willing to bide her time, but her mind turned to the restoration of absolute monarchy.

In 1751, Louisa became Queen and set about planning for an audacious coup d’état. After a number of false starts and plans that were snuffed out, her chance came in 1756, but betrayal and incompetence led to the plot’s discovery just days before it was put into action. Heads rolled, and Louisa was forced into a humiliating public apology. She remained active in public life, but privately she seethed.

Louisa’s final insult would come when her son Gustav III succeeded where she had failed. He took power back from the government in 1772, a year after his ascension. Finally, the monarchy had the power she had craved, but her fractious relationship with her son meant that she was marginalised. Their relationship only softened on her deathbed.



Frederick William II married twice officially, but was also known to have kept a number of long-standing mistresses

Frederick William II

b.1744-d.1797 1786-1797

King of culture

How do you follow greatness? That was the question facing Frederick William II when he ascended to the Prussian throne in 1786, following the death of his uncle, Frederick II. The legacy of his predecessor would hang heavy over the fourth Hohenzollern king, and ultimately he lacked the military acumen and rational mind to ever escape it.

Frederick William's 11 years in power did see Prussia expand its territory, primarily through the acquisition of lands during the further partitioning of Poland, but the nation also weakened from within. Poor handling of foreign policy as the French Revolution sparked a wave of panic through Europe did Prussia's standing on the continent no favours. And while the king's economic reforms, such as the abolishment of a number of government monopolies, made him a popular figure with his subjects, they came at great cost. Over the course of his reign, Prussia's wealth would deteriorate at an alarming rate.

Where Frederick II had been a champion of the Enlightenment - perhaps the great royal proponent of the movement - Frederick William II could not effectively continue his uncle's enlightened absolutism. Instead, he confided in and collaborated with a number of close associates, chief among them Johann Wöllner. Wöllner, an adherent to mysticism and Christian orthodoxy, would have a great deal of influence over Frederick William, with the king making him prime minister in all but name.

Today, though Frederick William II is generally assessed negatively as a ruler, he does leave a significant legacy as a result of his extensive artistic patronage. It was with the arts that his true affinity lay, and under his stewardship, Prussia welcomed many of Europe's leading painters, authors, architects and composers. Mozart and Beethoven visited, even dedicating music to him.

Wilhelmina, Princess of Orange

b.1751-d.1820

The exiled Princess

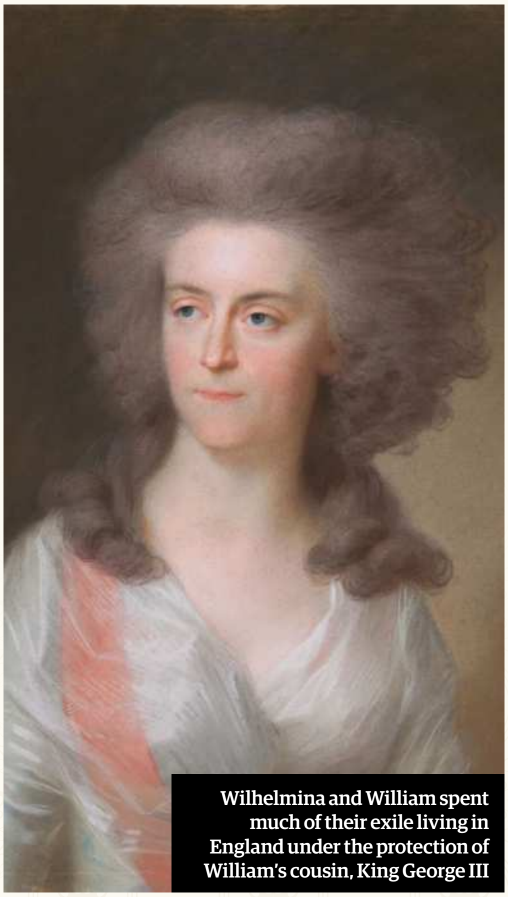
The influence of the House of Hohenzollern has frequently been felt beyond Prussia, but few have wielded it as consequentially as Frederika Sophia Wilhelmina, better known as Wilhelmina, Princess of Orange. A sharp and ambitious young woman, Wilhelmina was given an opportunity to make her mark when she married William V, Prince of Orange in 1767.

She found herself matched with an agreeable but malleable man - one she knew she could dominate, and found herself entering a foreign country with tensions between monarchy and government.

Officially a republic, power in the Dutch provinces had gradually been consolidated under the single, hereditary position of stadtholder. It was this position that William, and by proxy Wilhelmina, now held. But all was not well, and simmering discontent boiled over in 1780 as a faction called the Patriots began a campaign to seize power.

The task of putting down these revolutionaries fell to Wilhelmina, who for the next seven years led the loyal Orangist faction. Her family ties proved crucial, and the intervention of a 20,000-strong Prussian army led by her brother Frederick William II saw the Patriot cause defeated, and their leaders exiled to France.

In 1795, however, the Patriots returned with a vengeance - and with French revolutionary backing. This time Wilhelmina was forced to flee with William to England. She wouldn't see her home again for almost 20 years. When she returned in 1814, after the restoration of Dutch independence, she came without her husband, who had died in 1806. There was redemption for Wilhelmina, however, in the form of her son. Ascending to the throne in 1813, he became William I, the first king of the Netherlands. Their descendants have ruled ever since.



Wilhelmina and William spent much of their exile living in England under the protection of William's cousin, King George III

William I

b.1797-d.1888 ♛ King of Prussia: 1861-1888, German Emperor: 1871-1888

The German unifier

The rise of the House of Hohenzollern had seen its provincial aristocrats elevated to the status of kings, and their small duchy expand into the Prussia that in the 18th and 19th centuries could lay claim to being one of Europe's most powerful states. But the dynasty would reach its apex, at least in terms of titles and lands, with the coming of William (or Wilhelm) I, king of Prussia and Emperor of a united Germany.

Ascending to the Prussian throne in 1861, one of William's first, and certainly his most consequential, moves came a year later when he appointed Otto von Bismarck to the role of minister president. Over the next decade, Bismarck would be the driving force behind German unification, with the King taking a back seat to his now-chancellor's political machinations.

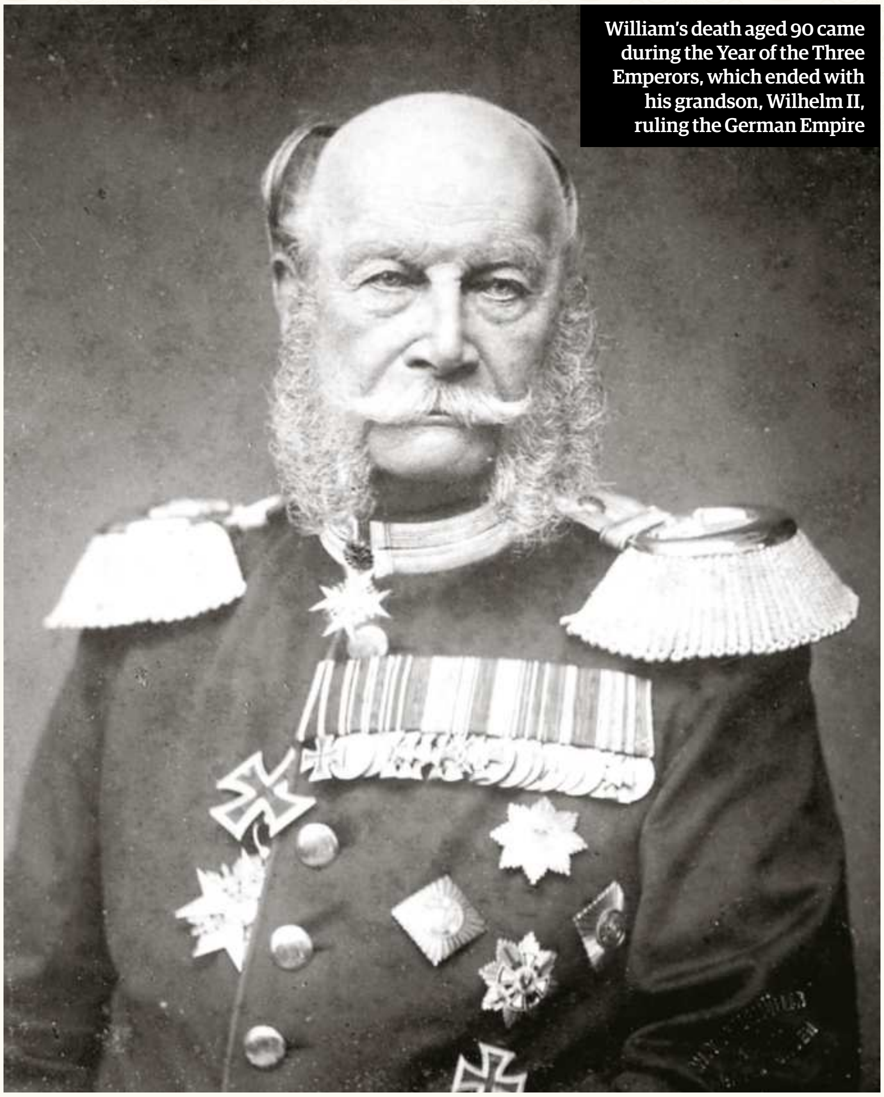
William's rise would culminate in 1871, amid the glittering glass of the Hall of Mirrors in the Palaces of Versailles. In these stunning surroundings - captured during the Franco-Prussian War - the king was officially proclaimed Emperor. As with his ancestor Frederick I, there was some quibbling over semantics. 'Emperor of Germany' was deemed too provocative as there remained German lands that fell outside the empire's borders, and 'Emperor of the Germans' didn't sit well with William because he felt it undermined his supposedly divine right to the title. The compromise of 'German Emperor' kept everyone, if not happy, at least content.

As the dust settled following this monumental union, the new Kaiser chose a process of continuity over radical change. In other words, he maintained his faith in Bismarck as the most vital cog in what was now a far larger and more complex imperial machine. While William would clash with his chancellor numerous times over the course of his reign, Bismarck's conviction, dominating personality and his indispensability to the administration meant that the Kaiser could not afford to cut him loose.

While a popular figure with the public, William was notable for suffering a number of assassination attempts during his reign. One occurred in 1878 in Berlin, when anarchist Max Hödel twice shot at the king's carriage at close range. Both William and his daughter Louise were unscathed but a bystander was killed. Weeks later, however, William would not be so lucky. On another open carriage ride, not far from where Hödel had fired, two blasts from a double-barrelled shotgun erupted from a window lining the street. Shots peppered the Kaiser and he slumped backwards with the force - had he not been wearing his ceremonial helmet he would likely have died instantly. The perpetrator this time was Karl Nobiling. By the time security forces reached him, he had already turned a revolver on himself. William, thankfully, improved steadily as he was treated over the coming days and would eventually make a full recovery.

These were not the first attempts on the Kaiser's life, nor would they be the last, but the two incidents in 1878 were the most significant because of their far-reaching consequences. The Socialist links of the would-be assassins were seized upon by Bismarck, and became the catalysts for his severe anti-Socialist legislation, which passed later that year.

When he died in 1888, William left his successors a German Empire that, while far from perfect, had survived a difficult birth and begun to settle into its role as one of the great powers in a new-look Europe.



William's death aged 90 came during the Year of the Three Emperors, which ended with his grandson, Wilhelm II, ruling the German Empire

> "William was notable for suffering a number of assassination attempts"

Augusta of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach

b.1811-d.1890

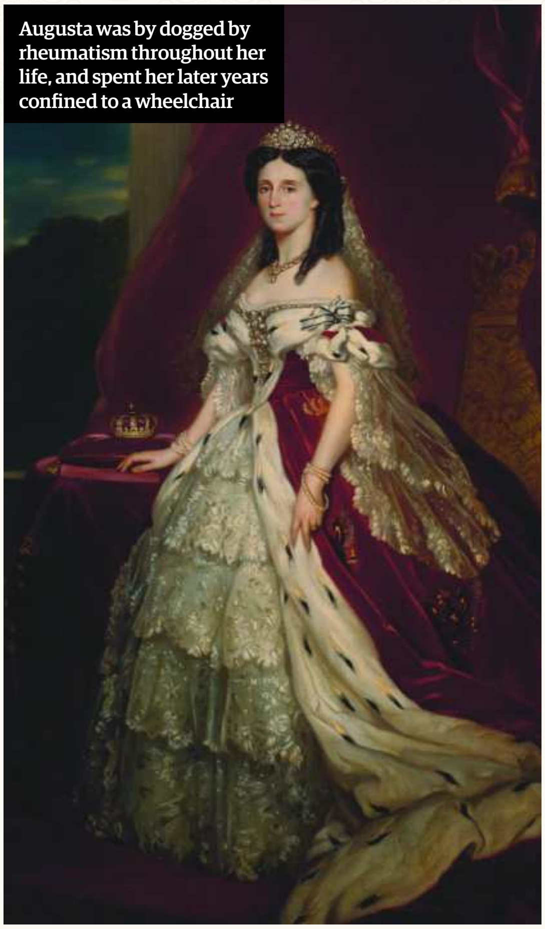
The unwilling Empress

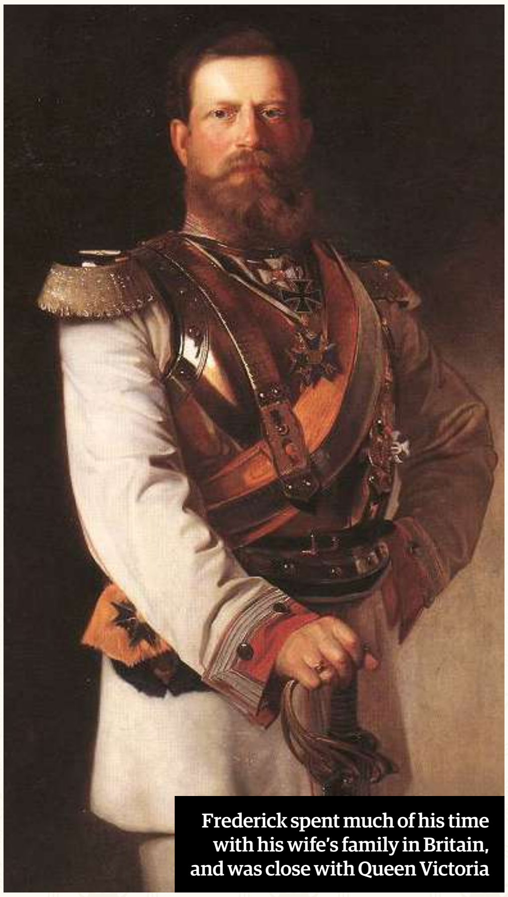
In the annals of history, Augusta of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach will go down as the first German Empress, though in a cruel twist of fate it was a title that she wished she'd never attained. Throughout the campaign of German unification driven by Otto von Bismarck, the wife of William I lamented that a country brought together by military force, rather than a common moral bond, was doomed to failure. Even as Germany prospered under its new Prussian leaders, the ideological divide between Augusta and William continued to widen.

Indeed, it was a disagreement that was indicative of their marriage of almost 60 years. William and Augusta first met in 1826, when he was 29 and she just 15. The young Princess had inherited a bright mind and sharp wit from her eminently intellectual mother, Grand Duchess Maria Pavlovna of Russia, but she wasn't an outstanding beauty, and William wasn't immediately taken with her. At the urging of his father, however, and amid growing unease about a lack of heirs, the young Prince agreed, and they married in 1829.

Augusta's upbringing had instilled in her a firmly liberal outlook, but she found few people of a similar mind when she first arrived at the Prussian court. She attempted to turn her husband to her way of thinking – especially after he became King – but he was more inclined to listen to Bismarck, with whom Augusta publicly feuded for decades.

Though her influence on William was limited, Augusta successfully passed her liberal ideals on to her children. Her best plans for a liberal German dynasty would not come to pass, though – Frederick succeeded in 1888, but died later that year. Augusta passed away in 1890, hoping her cherished grandson, Wilhelm II, would finally fulfil her dream of leading a progressive Germany into the modern era. It was not to be.


Augusta was by dogged by rheumatism throughout her life, and spent her later years confined to a wheelchair


Frederick spent much of his time with his wife's family in Britain, and was close with Queen Victoria

Frederick III

b.1831-d.1888 ♛ 1888

The unfulfilled Emperor

Frederick III is unique among Hohenzollern rulers, as he is perhaps more significant for what he might have achieved than for what he actually did during his 99 days on the throne. The shortest reign of any Hohenzollern monarch, it represented a brief window of hope for progressive Germans between the old conservatism of Otto von Bismarck, and the autocratic 'New Course' of Wilhelm II that would ultimately end in unprecedented disaster.

From an early age, Frederick demonstrated a different world view to his father and much of the ruling German elite. He was the first Prussian Prince to attend university, and his time at the University of Bonn instilled in him liberal ideals that would stay with him throughout his life. These liberal inclinations were further ingrained by his marriage to Victoria, Princess Royal, the eldest daughter of Queen Victoria of the United Kingdom. The marriage was intended to tie two countries together diplomatically, but it also united two well-matched, loving individuals.

Throughout his tenure as Crown Prince, Frederick was constantly at odds with his father – and more specifically with Bismarck. Frederick recognised the German chancellor effectively wielded absolute power, and frequently voiced opposition to his expansionist policies during the unification of Germany. Bismarck responded by excluding the Crown Prince from the political fold, side-lining him from any consequential offices, though Frederick would serve with distinction in the armed forces once war had been officially declared. Between campaigns, he waited for a chance to rid Germany of the chancellor and impose his own liberal ideas. When Frederick's opportunity finally came, however, it was too late. Ravaged by throat cancer, he died in 1888 after just three months as Emperor.

Wilhelm II

b.1859-d.1941 ♛ 1888-1918

Kaiser, killer

It's a sobering thought that the wrong person, in the wrong position, at the wrong time, can bring about a catastrophe that not only leaves millions dead, but fundamentally alters the state of the world they live in. While it's extremely reductive to place Kaiser Wilhelm II as the prime catalyst behind what soon became one of the most complex geopolitical events in history, he was, nevertheless, a catalyst.

The son of Frederick III and his wife Victoria, Wilhelm II's reign ultimately marked not only the end of the house of Hohenzollern as a royal dynasty, but also the end of the German Empire. He inherited a country still built upon the diplomatic ties forged by Otto von Bismarck, and over a period of 30 years would proceed to run it into the ground through blundering incompetence and catastrophic military escalation.

Wilhelm's troubles began at birth – literally – as complications left him with a withered left arm as a result of Erb's palsy, a disfigurement that he would do his best to conceal throughout his life. His childhood was marked by difficult relationships with his parents and other family members, in particular his British relatives. When it became apparent early on that Wilhelm did not share his father's liberal worldview, he began to receive attention from chancellor Otto von Bismarck, who saw the young man as a useful future ally.

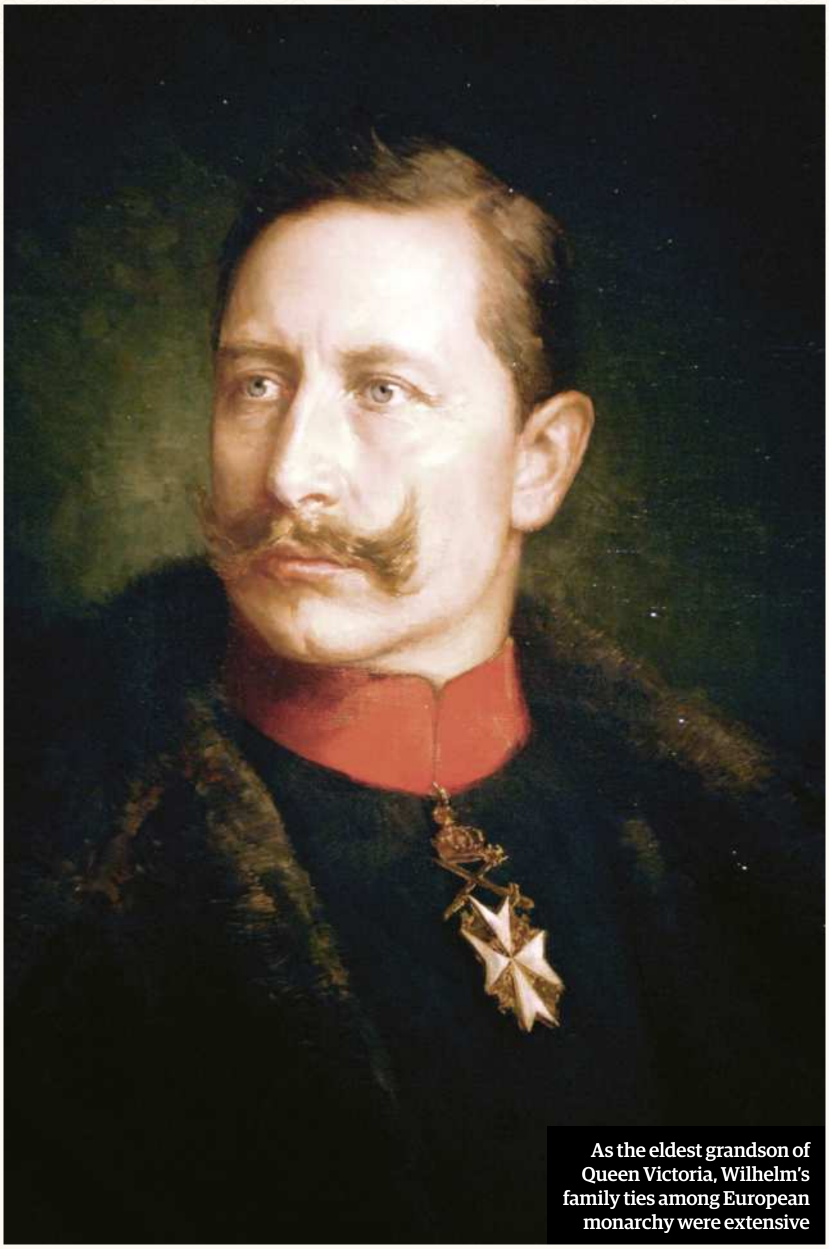
When in power, however, Wilhelm quickly began to forge his own path. Ascending to the imperial throne in 1888 after the deaths of his grandfather and father in quick succession, he made a point of voicing his opposition to a number of Bismarck's policies – in particular his prioritisation of peace with Germany's continental neighbours. After just two years of high-profile clashes, the veteran chancellor was forced to resign – an overt power shift that did not go unnoticed around Europe.

With Bismarck gone, Wilhelm was allowed increasing leeway in his social reforms and military expansion, but the loss of the country's most adept statesman was felt keenly. Intelligent, but brash and impetuous, Wilhelm made for a terrible diplomat, and a series of political blunders over the coming years alienated his family, his allies and his people. Eventually war became inevitable.

As events spiralled out of control, Wilhelm rounded on his former allies and the world was plunged into the greatest armed conflict it had ever seen. As soldiers died in their millions, and more suffered across the world, the Kaiser found himself increasingly marginalised by his own commanders. Over four horrendously bloody years, he was reduced to a figurehead, simultaneously decrying his enemies and absolving himself of any wrongdoing.

With Germany's capitulation imminent and Wilhelm's support at home dwindling, his position finally became untenable in 1918. Forced to abdicate, the disgraced former Emperor fled with his family to the neutral Netherlands. Though there were calls under the Treaty of Versailles for him to face extradition and be tried for war crimes, the Dutch government refused.

In his final years, Wilhelm watched from the Netherlands as Hitler's resurgent Germany conquered much of Western Europe, sending the Führer written congratulations. Increasingly frail in both mind and body, the ailing former Kaiser took to railing against the liberal evils of the British and Americans, and blamed his downfall on a Jewish conspiracy. He died in June 1941 – a relic on the fringes of a second global conflict that was, albeit indirectly and in part, of his making. It would take decades for the world to escape the disastrous shadow cast by the last Hohenzollern ruler.



As the eldest grandson of Queen Victoria, Wilhelm's family ties among European monarchy were extensive

> "Intelligent, but brash, Wilhelm made for a terrible diplomat"

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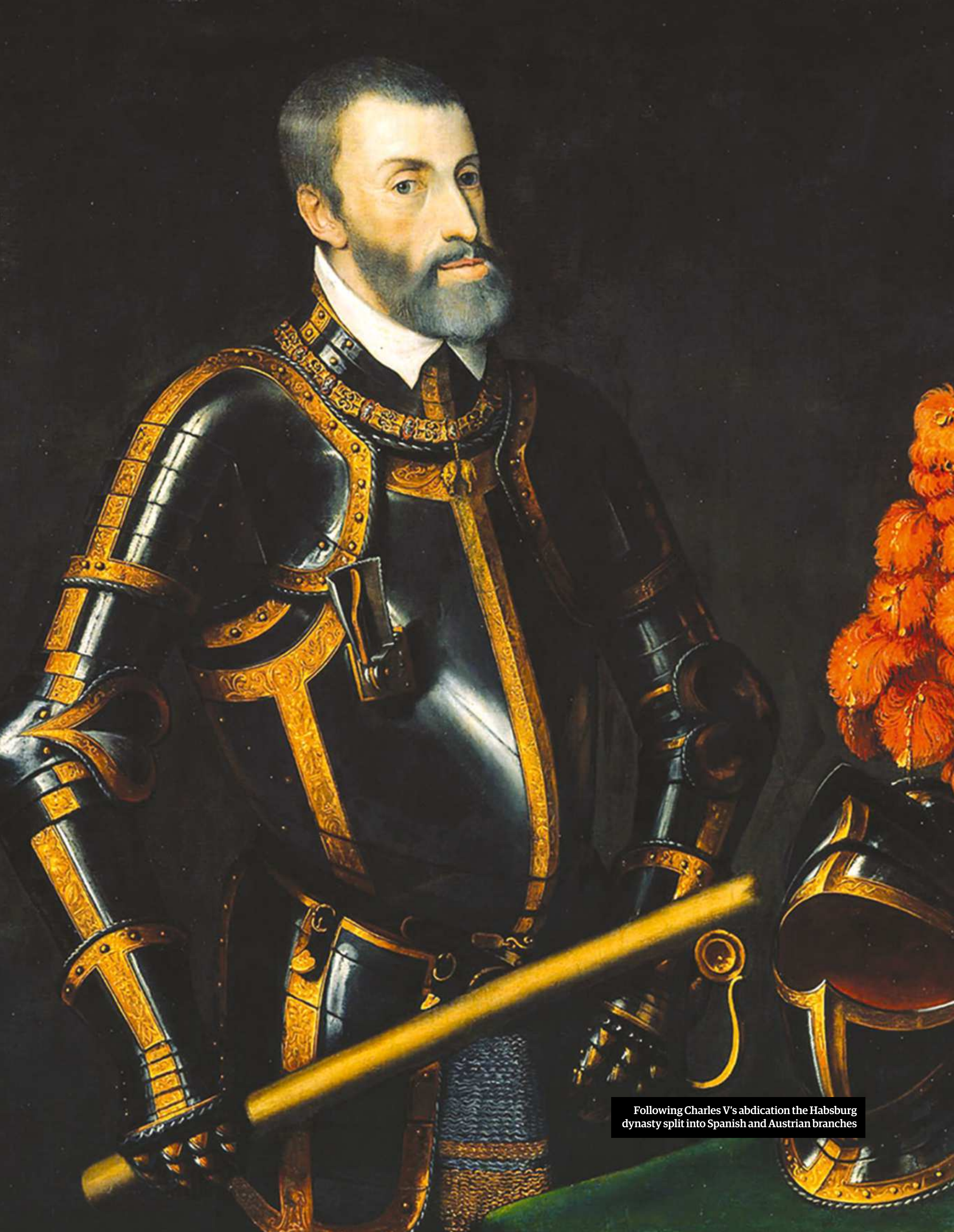
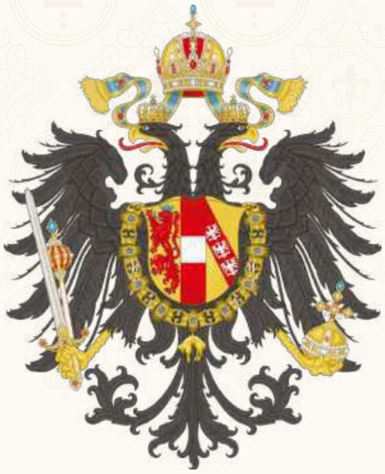


Following Charles V's abdication the Habsburg dynasty split into Spanish and Austrian branches



HABSBURG-LORRAINE

1740-1918

Few royal dynasties have been as influential or dramatic as the Habsburgs, who dominated the world stage for almost five centuries

Words MELANIE CLEGG

The great Habsburg dynasty had its origins in the 10th century when Radbot of Klettgau, a grandson of Adalrich, Duke of Alsace, built a fine castle in Habsburg, Switzerland and from that point onwards used its name for his family. There is some disagreement about what the name actually means, but it is most likely derived from Habichtsburg, which is High German for 'hawk castle'.

Over the next few centuries, the Habsburg family increased their territory and influence by the usual means of strategic alliances and prestigious marriages until they had become one of the greatest landowners in central Europe. In 1273, Count Rudolph of Habsburg was rewarded with the title of King of the Romans and the family's influence rapidly increased from that point onwards until finally Frederick of Austria fulfilled the family's primary ambition by being voted Holy Roman Emperor in 1452, taking the name Frederick III.

His son Maximilian would follow in his footsteps in 1508 and from that point on, although the position of Holy Roman Emperor was still nominally an elected one, there was never seriously any question of anyone other than a Habsburg inheriting the crown. Thanks to Maximilian's marriage to the great heiress Mary of Burgundy, the family acquired most of the Netherlands and a large chunk of France, which would be further boosted when Maximilian and Mary's son Philip married Juana of Castile, who inherited most of Spain from her parents Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castile, making Philip and Juana's son Charles the recipient of one of the greatest inheritances that the world had ever seen.

When Charles grew weary of ruling his vast empire, he left a significant portion, including Spain and the Netherlands to his son Philip II, but decided that his younger brother Ferdinand should take on the title of Holy Roman Emperor and all the territory that came with it, thus splitting the family into two distinct lines. Philip's descendants would rule over Spain until the Habsburg line died out, thanks to a policy of intermarriage that resulted in catastrophic inbreeding, with Charles II in 1700, to be replaced by a French Bourbon line, while Ferdinand's descendants would rule Austria until Karl I renounced the throne in 1918.

Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife in the hours before their assassinations

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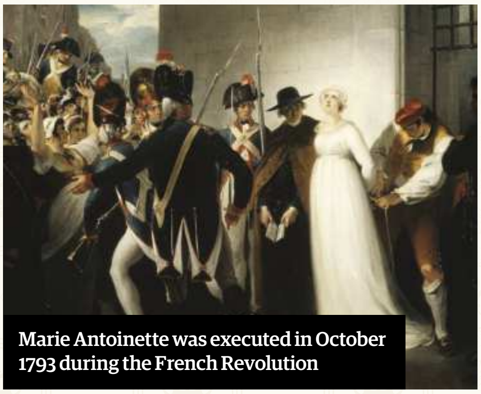

Marie Antoinette was executed in October 1793 during the French Revolution

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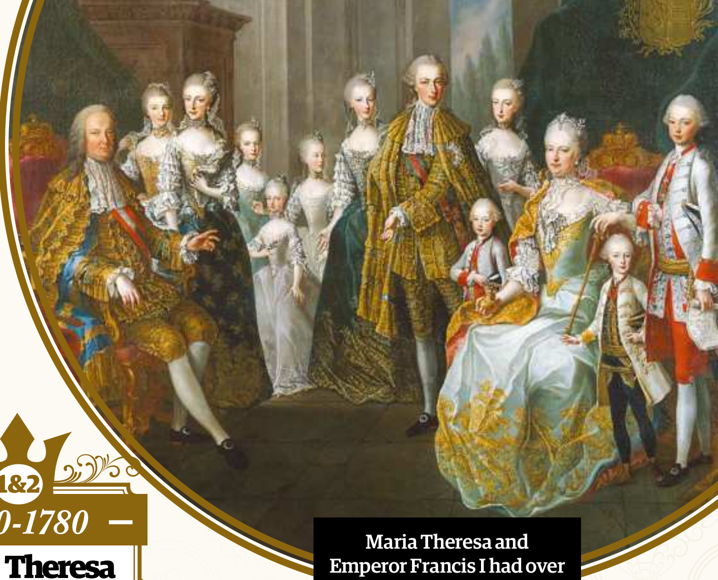
The PEDIGREE

Inside Europe's most elite royal dynasty



Maria Theresa and Emperor Francis I had over a dozen children

Order of succession

Marriage

1 – 1740-1765 –
Francis I
b.1708-d.1765
A great nephew of Louis XIV and Duke of Lorraine by birth, Francis was forced to give up his dukedom to marry Maria Theresa.

1&2 – 1740-1780 –
Maria Theresa
b.1717-d.1780
Turn to page 102

2 – 1765-1790 –
Joseph II
b.1741-d.1790

3 – 1790-1792 –
Leopold II
b.1747-d.1792

Maria Luisa of Spain
b.1745-d.1792

Maria Carolina
b.1752-d.1814

Ferdinand I of the Two Sicilies
b.1751-d.1825

Marie Antoinette
b.1755-d.1793
Turn to page 103

Louis XVI
b.1754-d.1793

4 – 1792-1835 –
Francis II
b.1768-d.1835
Francis II was just 24 years old when he succeeded his father as Holy Roman Emperor in 1792 and was almost immediately presented with the formidable and unenviable task of governing the vast imperial territories while fighting the French and fending off Napoleon's attacks.

Maria Teresa
b.1772-d.1807

Marie Thérèse of France
b.1778-d.1851

Louis Joseph, Dauphin of France
b.1781-d.1789

Louis XVII
b.1785-d.1795

> The beloved and spoiled only son of Emperor Franz Joseph I and Empress Elisabeth, Rudolf was a handsome playboy prince

Habsburg-Lorraine

© Getty Images

Marie Louise
b.1791-d.1847
Turn to page 103

Napoleon
b.1769-d.1821

5
1835-1848
Ferdinand I
b.1793-d.1875
Turn to page 104

Maria Anna of Savoy
b.1803-d.1884

Franz Karl
b.1802-d.1878

Sophie of Bavaria
b.1805-d.1872

6
1848-1916
Franz Joseph I
b.1830-d.1916

Empress Elisabeth
b.1837-d.1898
Turn to page 104

Maximilian I of Mexico
b.1832-d.1867
A younger brother of Emperor Franz Joseph I, Maximilian's life changed forever when Napoleon III offered to make him Emperor of Mexico. He took up his new position in 1864 but managed to remain on the throne for less than three years before being overthrown and executed by the Mexican government.

© Getty Images

Carlota of Mexico
b.1840-d.1927
Turn to page 105

Maria Annunciata of Bourbon-Two Sicilies
b.1843-d.1871

Karl Ludwig
b.1833-d.1896

Rudolf, Crown Prince of Austria
b.1858-d.1889
Turn to page 106
The beloved and spoiled only son of Emperor Franz Joseph I and Empress Elisabeth, Rudolf was a handsome playboy prince who neglected his wife and whose mysterious and violent death alongside his mistress scandalised and fascinated all of Europe.

Franz Ferdinand
b.1863-d.1914
Turn to page 107
The eldest nephew of Emperor Franz Joseph I, Franz Ferdinand became heir to the throne when his cousin Rudolf unexpectedly died.

Sophie, Duchess of Hohenberg
b.1868-d.1914

Otto Franz
b.1865-d.1906

Maria Josepha of Saxony
b.1867-d.1944

Princess Sophie of Hohenberg
b.1901-d.1990

Maximilian, Duke of Hohenberg
b.1902-d.1962

Prince Ernst of Hohenberg
b.1904-d.1954

7
1916-1918
Karl I
b.1887-d.1922
Turn to page 107

© Getty Images

Crown Prince Rudolf's body lies in state following the discovery of his lifeless body at Mayerling

Empress Maria Theresa

b.1717-d.1780 ♛ 1740-1780

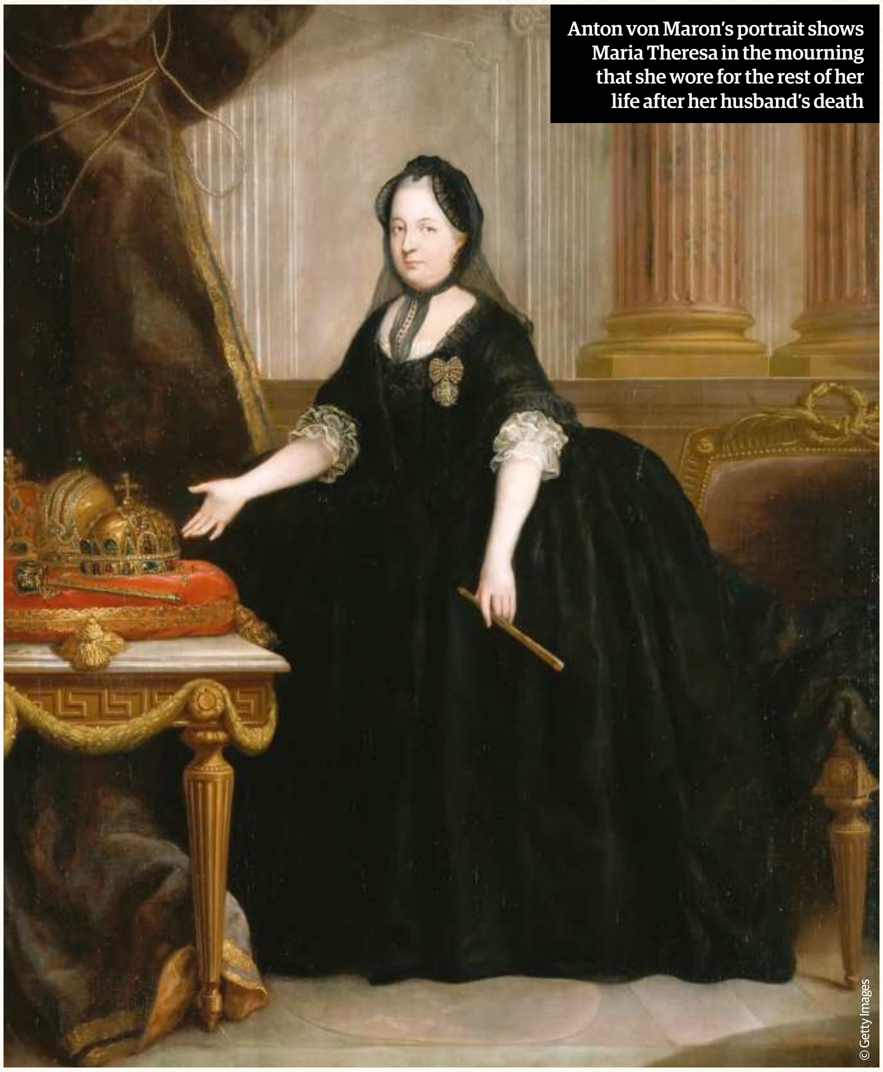
Mother of an empire

From the moment that she was born on 13 May 1717, Maria Theresa was heiress to the vast Habsburg realms ruled over by her father Emperor Charles VI. Her birth was a great disappointment though – an elder brother, Archduke Leopold had died in infancy less than a year earlier and her parents naturally hoped that the new baby would be another boy, as there had never been a Holy Roman Empress and the old prejudices against female rulers still lingered on.

However, although Emperor Charles was dismayed by Maria Theresa's birth, he nonetheless did his best to smooth the path for her eventual succession, although he did very little to prepare her for the great responsibility that would one day be hers, hoping that her future husband would be capable of governing on her behalf. The husband that he selected for her was François Stephen de Lorraine, a grandson of Louis XIV's brother Philippe, Duke of Orléans and Duke of Lorraine in his own right, although he was forced to give up his duchy in exchange for permission to marry Maria Theresa. The wedding took place in February 1736 and from the start Maria Theresa adored her husband, although he was initially rather less enamoured and continued to spend time with other women, much to her distress. However, despite this unpromising beginning, the couple would eventually become genuinely devoted to each other and produced an impressive 16 children, 13 of whom would survive infancy.

Maria Theresa was just 23 years old when her father suddenly died in 1740 and although her sharp intelligence and strong personality gave the impression she was more than capable of taking over, she knew just how inexperienced she was. Well aware that she had been ill-prepared for the task, she initially heavily relied on the advice of others, especially her husband, as she worked to take full control of her inheritance. One of the main problems was the fact that there had never been a female ruler of the Holy Roman Empire and so she had to pull strings in order to have her husband created emperor instead – with the aim of ruling through him. Another problem was that several rulers, including Frederick II of Prussia, that had vowed to uphold her right to rule, now broke their promises and challenged her on the behalf of other claimants to the throne, while also threatening to take away large chunks of her territory. The ensuing War of the Austrian Succession, which pitted Austria against France, Prussia and Spain, dragged on for almost eight years but ended with a victory for Maria Theresa, who was confirmed in her position in 1748. Although her reign would never be entirely free of conflict with other powers, Maria Theresa's position as ruler of her empire would never again be in question and her reign would ultimately be regarded as one that brought great prosperity for her people thanks to her wise benevolence and financial reforms that greatly improved the economy.

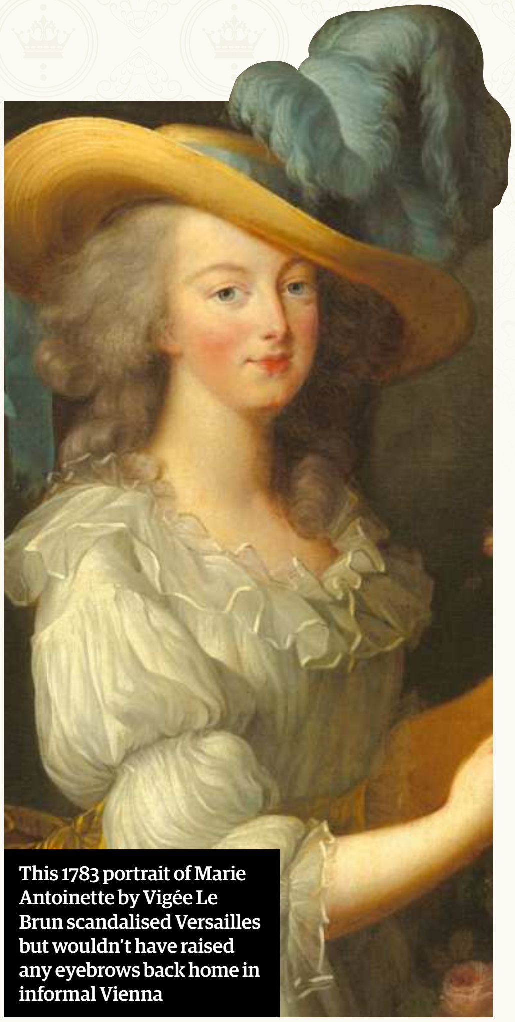
When her husband died in August 1765, Maria Theresa was devastated and adopted mourning for the rest of her life. Her grief was compounded by the fact that his death meant that the position of emperor was inherited by their eldest son, who assumed the title Joseph II. However, although the new emperor was well within his rights to take sole charge of his inheritance, he agreed to rule alongside his mother – with not always happy results as their personalities clashed and they often had violent disagreements. Both considered abdication at various points in their co-rule but eventually they learnt to work together and Maria Theresa was still very much in control and a force to be reckoned with when she died on 24 November 1780 at the age of 63.



Anton von Maron's portrait shows Maria Theresa in the mourning that she wore for the rest of her life after her husband's death

© Getty Images

> "The couple would become genuinely devoted to each other"



This 1783 portrait of Marie Antoinette by Vigée Le Brun scandalised Versailles but wouldn't have raised any eyebrows back home in informal Vienna

Marie Antoinette

b.1755-d.1793

The doomed queen

As the youngest of Maria Theresa and Francis I's eight daughters to survive the perils of 18th-century childhood, Marie Antoinette (who was known as Maria Antonia until she left Austria to be married) was not originally destined for an especially glittering future thanks to the fact that her mother had already snapped up the most eligible princes in Europe for her elder sisters.

However, when smallpox killed two sisters and disfigured another before they could be married, Marie Antoinette's prospects improved enormously and she was betrothed to the Dauphin Louis of France, eldest grandson of Louis XV. Marie Antoinette's time in France was fraught with difficulties right from the start, mainly because decades of conflict between the two nations had led to Austrians being hated and distrusted there. Another issue was the fact that her marriage remained unconsummated for several years, which undermined her position both in private and at court. Bored and frustrated, Marie Antoinette distracted herself with frivolities, to the despair of her mother and siblings who often wrote to reprimand and advise her, but then settled down when she had her first child in 1778, four years after her husband succeeded to the French throne.

As queen of France, Marie Antoinette often found herself in a difficult position when tension arose between Austria and France and there is evidence that she often acted as a peacemaker between the two. However, after the start of the French Revolution and internment of the royal family in 1789, her actions and loyalties were regarded with even more suspicion, especially after the French declared war on Austria, which was ruled by her nephew Emperor Francis II. Unfortunately, her family were unable to do anything other than protest from afar when her husband was executed in January 1793 and her own situation became increasingly precarious until she herself was put on trial and then guillotined on 16 October 1793.

Marie Louise of France

b.1791-d.1847

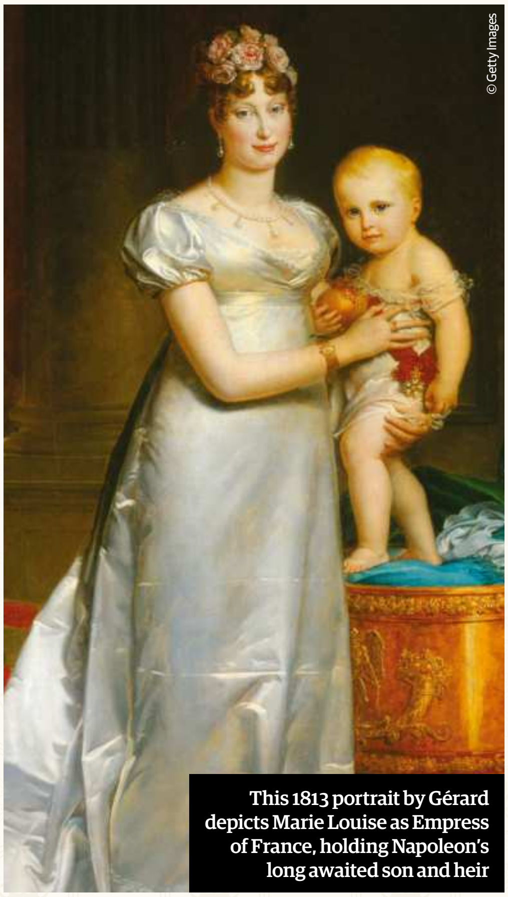
Bonaparte bride

Marie Louise, the eldest daughter of Emperor Francis II and his second wife Maria Teresa of Naples, both of whom were grandchildren of Empress Maria Theresa, was born in the Hofburg Palace in Vienna on 12 December 1791.

Within a few years of her birth, her great-aunt Marie Antoinette had been guillotined and France had declared war on her native Austria, with the consequence that Marie Louise and her siblings were all raised to dislike and distrust the French. Matters only became worse when Napoleon came to power and began to wage war throughout Europe, with several of Marie Louise's family being affected, including her maternal grandmother Maria Carolina, who was forced to flee her home in Naples.

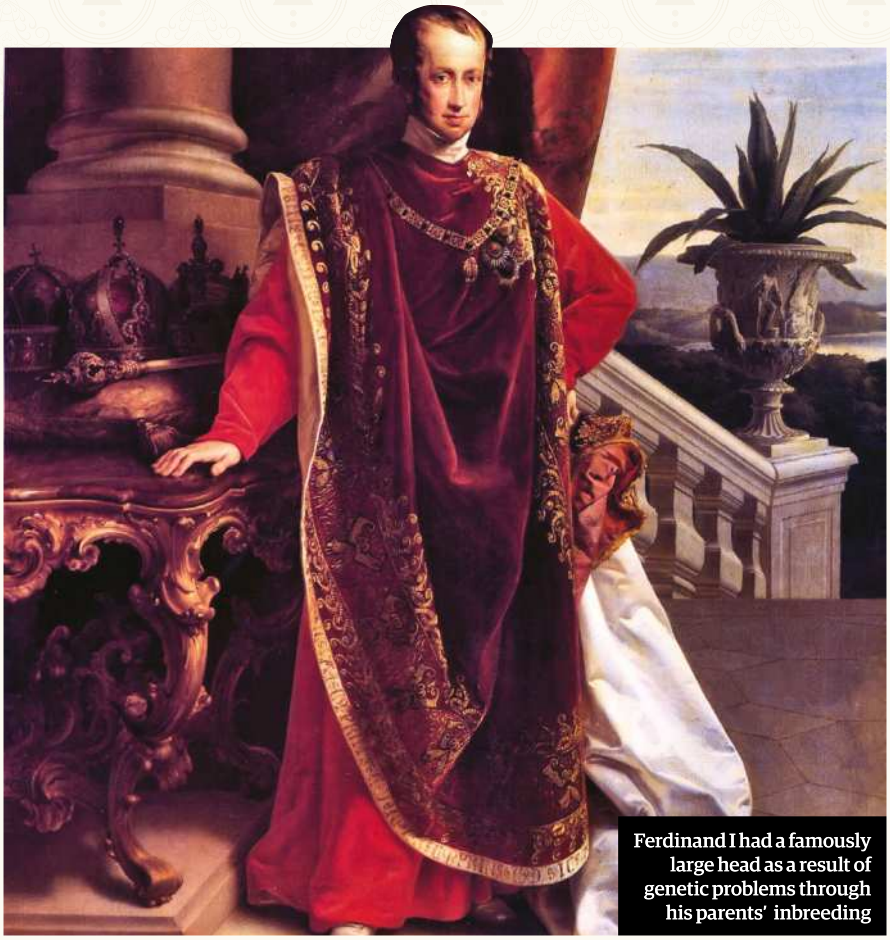
However, when the Austrians suffered a crushing defeat and her father was forced to pursue an alliance with the hated French, Marie Louise found herself betrothed to a man that she had been taught to hate. She married Napoleon in 1810 and delighted him less than a year later by not only being a pliant and biddable wife but also presenting him with a male heir. However, although she quickly grew accustomed to her position as empress of the French, Marie Louise's time at Napoleon's side was destined to be relatively short as a series of defeats and disappointments led to his final abdication and imprisonment in 1815. Marie Louise and her son returned home to Vienna before she was compensated for the loss of her imperial title with the Duchy of Parma, where she remained for the rest of her life.

She scandalised her family by having two illegitimate children with her chief advisor, the Count von Neipperg, whom she married after Napoleon's death in 1821. After Neipperg's death in 1829, she married for a third time to her chamberlain, Charles-René de Bombelles, who was at her side when she died in 1847 at the age of 56.



© Getty Images

This 1813 portrait by Gérard depicts Marie Louise as Empress of France, holding Napoleon's long awaited son and heir



Ferdinand I had a famously large head as a result of genetic problems through his parents' inbreeding

Ferdinand I

b.1793-d.1875 ♛ 1835-1848

Incest's victim

The son of double first cousins, Ferdinand I was an unwitting victim of the infamous Habsburg interbreeding that had extinguished the dynasty's prodigious Spanish branch.

Born on 19 April 1793, Ferdinand was the first-born son of Emperor Francis II and his wife, Marie Terese. Ferdinand's parents were themselves double first cousins, both sharing the same four grandparents - meaning that their son, who should've had eight great-grandparents, only had four. Tragically the young boy suffered for his parents inbreeding; he was epileptic - experiencing as many as 20 fits a day - and suffered from several other genetic diseases.

As a result of his ailments, Ferdinand was slow to develop in childhood, but he proved to be a keen and studious pupil. After his mother's death when he was aged 14, Ferdinand's new stepmother arranged for her inherited son to receive an education better suited to an heir, and Ferdinand flourished under his new tutors.

In 1831 he was arranged to be married to Maria Anna of Savoy, who took the news of her impending nuptials dismally. However, over the time the couple became genuinely fond of one another, and Maria Anna tended to her husband dotingly.

Just four years after their wedding, the inevitable happened. Emperor Francis II passed away, leaving his throne to Ferdinand. Despite never being formally declared incapacitated, a regency formed of three noblemen was created to help the new emperor with his role. Ferdinand proved to be a kind and benevolent leader, but the 1848 revolutions that swept Europe caught up with the Habsburgs. Aware that he wasn't the man to rise up against the rebels, Ferdinand abdicated in favour of his nephew, Franz Joseph.

In retirement, Ferdinand lived with his wife in Prague Castle, eventually dying there at the age of 82.

Empress Elisabeth

b.1837-d.1898

The reluctant empress

When Elisabeth - second daughter of Maximilian Joseph, Duke in Bavaria, head of a junior branch of the noble House of Wittelsbach, and his wife Princess Ludovika of Bavaria - was born on 24 December 1837, no one could ever have suspected that she would one day become one of the most famous and talked about women in the world.

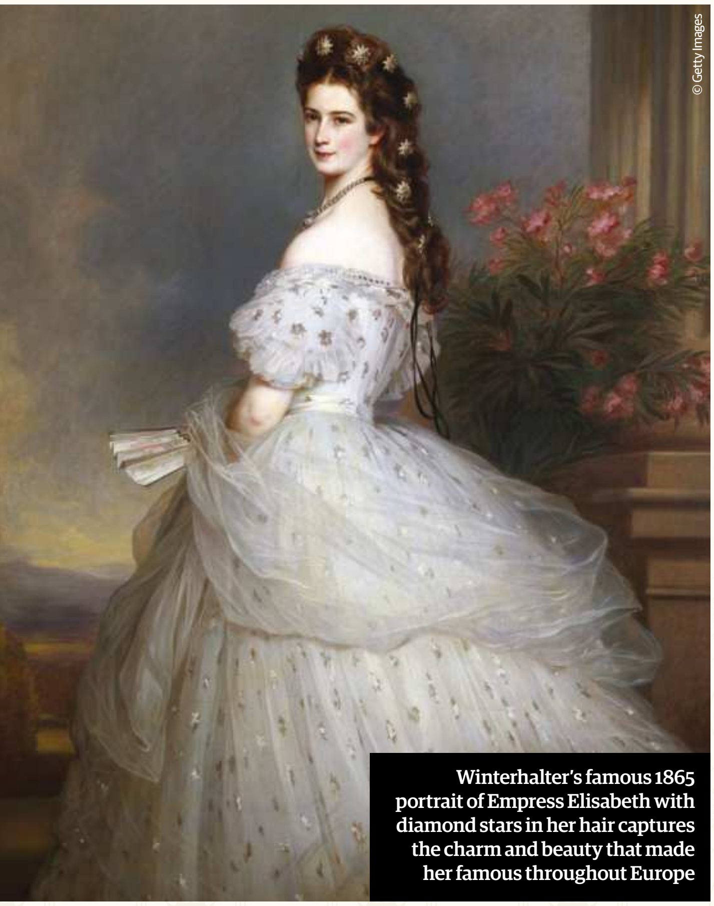
The duke was a notorious eccentric, who was obsessed with circuses and preferred roaming around the countryside to court life, while his duchess was far more conventional and fiercely ambitious for their ten children, which included five extremely lovely daughters, all of whom would one day make very prestigious marriages. Elisabeth, who was nicknamed 'Sisi', was considered to be exceptionally beautiful but to her mother's despair, she had inherited her father's unconventional personality and impatience with the strictures and etiquette of court life. The atmosphere in the family home, Possenhofen Castle, was extremely informal and despite the best efforts of their mother, Elisabeth and her siblings ran wild. In 1853, Duchess Ludovika escorted her two eldest daughters, Helene and Elisabeth, who was not quite 16, to visit her sister Sophie, who was married to the Archduke Franz Karl of Austria. This was no mere family get-together though, for Sophie had brought along her eldest son, the 23-year-old Emperor Franz Joseph, and both she and Ludovika hoped that the lovely but shy Helene would catch his eye. However, to their surprise, Franz Joseph instead fell head over heels in love with her younger sister and insisted upon asking her to marry him. The couple were married eight months later on 24 April 1854.

After enjoying such a happy, carefree childhood, Elisabeth was stunned by the rigid etiquette and tiresome formality of the Habsburg court, where she was expected to obey her mother-in-law, Sophie, at all times. When she bore her first child in 1855, just ten months after her wedding, Sophie insisted upon naming the baby after herself and took complete charge of her upbringing, rarely allowing Elisabeth to see her own daughter. When a second daughter, Gisela, was born a year later, the same thing happened again, leaving Elisabeth completely bereft and miserable. The death of baby Sophie at the age of two made matters even worse until Elisabeth finally gave birth to a son, Rudolf, in 1858, which improved her standing at the imperial court, although like his sisters, the baby was primarily raised by his controlling grandmother. As she grew older and more confident, Elisabeth felt more able to rebel against the strictures that she found so intolerable, by spending increasing amounts of time away from court

> “She maintained a very strict diet and exercise regime”

and her family. She also became extremely preoccupied with her appearance - already extremely thin, she maintained a very strict diet and exercise regime and wore restrictive corsets that reduced her waist to just 16 inches in circumference. She was also exceedingly concerned about her hair, which fell to her feet, and complexion, which she assisted with a strict regime of tonics, and raw veal face masks, which she wore overnight. Elisabeth spent hours every day tending to her appearance but was still so self-conscious about the natural effects of ageing that she would not allow anyone to take her photo after she turned 32.

When her son was found dead alongside his mistress in mysterious circumstances, Elisabeth was completely distraught and was seen in public even more rarely, preferring to travel restlessly around Europe and north Africa, where she shunned other monarchs and spent hours riding or going for long walks. It was during one of these trips, to Geneva in 1898, that Elisabeth was fatally stabbed by a young Italian anarchist, Luigi Lucheni, while taking her daily walk by the lake.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Winterhalter's famous 1865 portrait of Empress Elisabeth with diamond stars in her hair captures the charm and beauty that made her famous throughout Europe

© Getty Images

Carlota was Maximilian's beautiful wife, but after the couple lost the Mexican throne, her mental wellbeing deteriorated

Carlota of Mexico

b.1840-d.1927

The mad queen of Mexico

The eldest daughter of King Leopold I of Belgium, Charlotte adopted the name Carlota while in Mexico. Her father had long encouraged her relationship with Maximilian, and when the two married, the couple were appointed to a lowly post as governors of Lombardy-Venetia, an Italian province under Austrian control. Their venture, however, turned to disaster as the movement for Italian unification grew.

With their rule in Italy over after just two years, Maximilian turned his attentions to Brazil, where his cousin, Emperor Pedro II, ruled as a relatively popular and moderate monarch. Thousands of miles across the Atlantic, Brazil was something of a safe haven. Brazil had cut ties with its European fatherland, Portugal, in 1822. Maximilian sailed on to Bahia, where he began to wonder if one day he could emulate Pedro.

When he was approached by Napoleon III to take the throne of Mexico, both Maximilian and an equally ambitious Carlota were eager to take up the offer. Preparations were soon made for the royal couple to leave for Mexico. European - mainly French - troops initially supported them both until they could build up a new Mexican army and there was a financial agreement with France.

On 2 October 1863, Maximilian was formally offered the Mexican imperial throne with Carlota as empress. But if the royal couple thought that their life in Mexico would be easy, then they were both mistaken. Mexico was in turmoil, and the problems it faced were not just internal. The US saw this new monarchy as a threat to their domestic security and put pressure on Napoleon III to withdraw his support. In 1866, Napoleon conceded.

The humiliation was too great for Carlota, and she suffered a mental breakdown. The following year, after Maximilian was found guilty of trumped-up charges, he was executed by firing squad.

Maximilian's family blamed Carlota for the whole affair, no doubt contributing to her mental decline. Too ill to attend her husband's funeral in 1868, she never recovered. Carlota died in 1927, a victim of cruel tales in the press in her final years.

Rudolf, Crown Prince of Austria

b.1858-d.1889

The lover and the murderer?

Immortalised in film and literature, the Mayerling incident has all the ingredients of the most incredible scandals. With the Austro-Hungarian Empire's heir and his beautiful teenage lover caught in a web of sex, intrigue, murder and suicide, it's hardly surprising that the suicide pact that shattered the peace of a Viennese forest in 1889 caught the attention of the general public. It began, as so many scandals do, with a forbidden love affair. The protagonists were Crown Prince Rudolf of Austria, and his mistress, Baroness Marie Vetsera, known as Mary.

As the only son of Emperor Franz Joseph and Empress Elisabeth, Rudolf was heir apparent to Europe's most powerful throne. He had been married to Princess Stéphanie of Belgium since 1881, yet the union was not a happy one and the crown prince longed to be free of his wife. With no hope of securing a divorce, he turned his back on Stéphanie in favour of his many mistresses. It was one of these unfortunate mistresses who would die beside him deep in the Vienna woods on 30 January 1889.

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Crown Prince Rudolf was married, but he took a 17-year-old as his mistress

On the evening before his death, Crown Prince Rudolf had joined his parents for a dinner they had thrown prior to their trip to Hungary. Rudolf was distracted throughout the meal and left the dinner uncharacteristically early that evening, eager to travel to Mayerling in preparation for a hunting party the following day. Although this was true, no doubt the fact that his 17-year-old mistress was waiting for him at the lodge might have been another reason not to hang around at dinner.

When Rudolf and Mary met at Mayerling, they retired to bed. As the night drew on nobody in the lodge heard anything untoward and, when Rudolf's valet, Loschek, knocked at his door the following morning, he had no reason to expect anything out of the ordinary. When no reply came despite his best efforts, Loschek seized an axe and hacked at the door until the door swung open.

Sitting on a chair beside the bed, a table set with a glass and mirror before him, was Rudolf. He was dead, the only sign of anything untoward being a thread of crimson blood trickling from his open mouth. On the bed lay the body of Mary and there could be no doubt that both had been dead for some time. In the half-light Loschek and Hoyos saw no obvious signs of a struggle or violence, though the glass led them to believe that the couple might have drunk poison. The suggestion that Rudolf might have committed suicide sent shock waves throughout the royal household. It would be a scandal too far for a ruling Catholic family, and almost immediately a damage limitation exercise began.

The authorities converged on Mayerling and sealed off the entire area as they carried out their investigations. Over the following months, Rudolf's death was attributed to an aneurism, but with media hounding the case, it was later claimed that Rudolf had shot his mistress before turning the gun on himself. The motive was one of despair, the doctor claimed, with Rudolf driven to desperate measures by his father's demands that he break off his affair. Heartbroken by the thought that he must abandon his lover, Rudolf talked her into a suicide pact.

As years went by, the story of the deaths at Mayerling passed into history, yet the curious conclusion was never forgotten. Years passed before the Mayerling incident began to stir again. In the wake of World War II, Mary's grave had been disturbed, her coffin smashed open by the occupying Red Army. The family invited a local physician to examine Mary's remains, who concluded that her skeleton showed no evidence of a bullet hole.

In 2015, there came a coda to the story. During an audit in Austria's Schoellerbank, a safety deposit box was discovered, seemingly with no known owner. Inside the box were family photographs and letters written by Mary Vetsera in the days leading up to her death. Deposited in 1926 by an unknown client and subsequently forgotten, among the papers were farewell notes from Mary to her family. This final piece of the jigsaw proved beyond a doubt that Mary and Rudolf intended to die. This was no murder, but a pact between a passionate couple who could not stand the thought of being torn apart.

Archduke Franz Ferdinand

b.1863-d.1914

An assassin's victim

Archduke Franz Ferdinand is probably best remembered not for his life, but for the manner of his death. Were it not for the fact that he took a detour through the streets of Sarajevo and ran into Gavrilo Princip, the archduke might have lived a life devoid of incident. Instead, the spilling of his noble blood led to World War I and the death of millions.

After his cousin Rudolf's mysterious death at Mayerling in 1889, Franz's father, Karl Ludwig, became heir presumptive to the Habsburg dominions. Upon the elder man's death in 1896, the claim now lay at Franz's feet. But Franz lacked the common touch; many of the policies that he intended to impose upon his succession were unpopular - with disastrous consequences. The Black Hand, a Serbian terrorist group, plotted to assassinate him in order to prevent his policies from ever being implemented. They would succeed in 1914.

In life, however, Franz proved to be a passionate man, both in love and in pleasure. Having fallen head over heels in love with a woman called Sophie in 1894, Franz was determined to make her his wife. But according to Habsburg law, a Habsburg could only marry someone descended from one of Europe's ruling dynasties. Sophie was a lady-in-waiting. Franz, however, refused to let something as trifling as a deficiency of blue blood stifle his dreams; he continued to court Sophie and, in 1899, Emperor Franz Joseph finally relented and allowed his nephew to marry, but only on the condition that their marriage was morganatic and their children were excluded from the line of succession.

When, on 28 June 1914, he was brutally murdered in the streets of Sarajevo, he did not die alone; his beloved wife Sophie was also killed. Their three children, left parentless before reaching their teenage years, became the first unlucky orphans of World War I.

Archduke Franz Ferdinand was assassinated on the streets of Sarajevo in 1914

After losing his throne in the wake of World War I, Karl was determined to win it back, but died in 1922

© Getty Images

Karl I

b.1887-d.1922 ♛ 1916-1918

Demise of a dynasty

In the wake of Franz Ferdinand's assassination at the hands of a Serbian terrorist group, Karl became the heir presumptive to Emperor Franz Joseph. In the years where Karl was expected to learn the trade of Habsburg rule, he was instead cast aside while Europe became a battlefield, home to the chattering guns of World War I.

By 1916, Emperor Franz Joseph was dead and Karl had succeeded the throne, faced with an infinitely complex political situation. Not only was war waging on, but his lands were struggling and a famine was ravaging his dominions. Aware that if war ended badly, it would spell disaster for his dynasty, Karl sought a means to keep his throne secure. For this young, new emperor, the solution was simple: peace.

Karl I became determined and desperate to negotiate peace and to put an end to the bloodshed that raged across Europe. Almost as soon as his coronation was finished, Karl entered into secret peace treaty negotiations with France in an attempt to draw the war to an end. After several months of back and forth, the negotiations foundered and, when French president Georges Clemenceau revealed that the Emperor Karl I had been scheming away for peace behind Germany's back in 1918, it left the Austro-Hungarian Empire in a very precarious, diplomatically disastrous, position.

As the bloody and brutal war came to its closing days, Karl's empire was on the brink of complete collapse. On 11 November 1918, Karl I renounced his "participation in the administration of the State" - interestingly, Karl consciously avoided using the term 'abdication', determined to one day claim back his throne. But in April 1919 the Habsburg Law was passed, officially dethroning Karl I and forbidding him from ever entering Austria again.

Exiled, Karl plotted a way to reclaim his thrones, but his death in 1922 put a final end to his attempts.

© Getty Images

Windsor Castle, the building after which the dynasty is named

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WINDSOR

1917-present

As World War I divided monarchies across Europe, the Saxe-Coburg-Gothas revolutionised the British monarchy, starting with their name

Words KATHARINE MARSH & PHILIPPA GRAFTON

On 20 June 1917, the *Manchester Guardian* ran the headline "British surnames instead of German names and titles". It was the start of a new era for the British royalty as the House of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha went under what was essentially a rebrand, ridding itself of anything that could link it to the German enemy on the continent during the dark days of World War I. The House of Windsor, named after the castle, was born.

The reign of the Windsor dynasty has overseen many national and international milestones, such as the independence of Ireland, the Partition of India and two World Wars. It was also under George V, the House's founder, that the annual Christmas broadcast began – something that is still carried out by the sovereign to this day, albeit on television instead of the radio.

Although the House of Windsor has always put up a front of stability and grace, it has been no stranger to scandal throughout its time on the throne. King Edward VIII didn't make it as far as his coronation ceremony, instead abdicating a few months beforehand to marry American divorcée Wallis Simpson. Princess Margaret was portrayed in the press as the party princess, living it large with the good and the great.

Sometimes referred to as 'The Firm', today's Windsors are a constitutional monarchy, spending their time carrying out ceremonial and charitable duties across the United Kingdom and around the world. However, intrigue into the private lives of the royals has far from died down, with events such as the wedding of the Duke and Duchess of Sussex and media coverage of the births of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge's children attracting attention from all corners of the Earth as the dynasty becomes a new House for a new age.

Corgis have been associated with the Windsors since George VI

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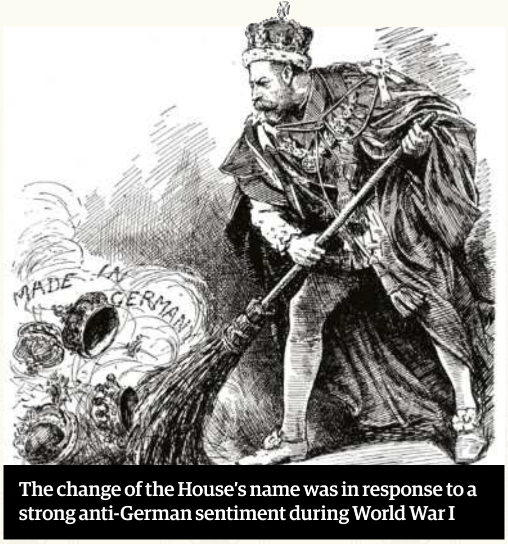

The change of the House's name was in response to a strong anti-German sentiment during World War I

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The
PEDIGREE

Previously known as the Saxe-Coburg and Gothas, the name was changed in 1917 as anti-German tension grew in Britain during World War I

Order of succession

Marriage

The family portrait of the Windsors on the day of Queen Elizabeth II's christening, 29 May 1926

Mary of Teck
b.1867-d.1953

1
1910-1936
George V
b.1865-d.1936
Turn to page 112

Wallis Simpson
b.1896-d.1986

2
1936
Edward VIII
b.1894-d.1972
Upon the death of George V, Edward took up the mantle as King of England. He never reached his coronation, however - he abdicated on 11 December 1936 in order to marry Wallis Simpson, the scandalous divorced American socialite.

Mary, Princess Royal
b.1897-d.1965
The only daughter of George V and Mary of Teck, Princess Mary was arranged to marry Viscount Lascelles in 1922. Both Mary and her brother Edward were opposed the marriage, as it wasn't done out of love. Until her death in 1965, she was a devoted patron to the British Girl Guide Association.

Henry, Earl of Harewood
b.1882-d.1947

Princess Marina of Greece and Denmark
b.1906-d.1968
Cousin to Elizabeth II's husband Prince Philip, Princess Marina was long considered a style icon among the public. She died of a brain tumour at Kensington Palace in 1968.

George, Duke of Kent
b.1902-d.1942

Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon
b.1900-d.2002
Turn to page 112

3
1936-1952
George VI
b.1895-d.1952

Lady Alice, Duchess of Gloucester
b.1901-d.2004

Henry, Duke of Gloucester
b.1900-d.1974
Turn to page 113

Prince John
b.1905-d.1919
Turn to page 114

William
b.1941-d.1972
Turn to page 115

Richard
b.1944

Edward
b.1935

Alexandra
b.1936

Michael
b.1942

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4
1952-now
Elizabeth II
b.1926
Turn to page 115

Philip, Duke of Edinburgh
b.1921-d.2021

Princess Margaret
b.1930-d.2002
Princess Margaret was renowned for her status as the 'party princess'. In 1960 she married photographer Antony Armstrong-Jones, but they controversially divorced 18 years later.

Antony, Earl of Snowden
b.1930-2017

Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall
b.1947

Charles, Prince of Wales
b.1948
The first son of the Queen, Charles is next in line to the throne. His affair with Camilla Parker-Bowles, later the Duchess of Cornwall after their marriage in 2005, caused controversy, with some monarchists claiming that he should give up his right of succession.

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Diana, Princess of Wales
b.1961-d.1997
Turn to page 116

Anne, Princess Royal
b.1950

Prince Andrew, Duke of York
b.1960

Prince Edward, Earl of Wessex
b.1964

> Some monarchists claim that he should give up his right of succession

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Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge
b.1982
Turn to page 117

William, Duke of Cambridge
b.1982

Harry, Duke of Sussex
b.1984
Turn to page 117

Meghan, Duchess of Sussex
b.1981

Archie Harrison Mountbatten-Windsor
b.2019

Lilibet Diana Mountbatten-Windsor
b.2021

Prince George
b.2013
George's conception triggered the Succession to the Crown Act of 2013, which replaced the male-preference succession with absolute primogeniture. This would've given the yet-unborn child their right to succession regardless of gender.

Princess Charlotte
b.2015

Prince Louis
b.2018

George V as photographed around the time of his ascension to the throne in 1910

King George V

b.1865-d.1936 ♛ 1910-1936

The king of the castle

As would become a characteristic of the modern British royal family, George V was never meant to be king. Second son to King Edward VII, the untimely demise of George's elder brother, Prince Albert Victor, in 1892 ensured that the rather less scandalous Prince George would ascend the throne upon the death of their father.

In 1910, George took his father's seat upon the British throne and began what would become the most influential, innovative reign of any monarch at the time.

George interpreted Edward VII's reign as how not to rule a country and chose to eschew his father's traditions in an attempt to bring the monarchy back to some semblance of respectability. Calm, quiet and dutiful, George was the exact opposite of his sociable father, who took pleasure in drinking, hunting and women.

In his attempt to instill the morals and a sense of duty that his father had lacked into his six children, however, George's hardline, strict parenting alienated his children and left them fearful of him. In particular, George's eldest son and heir, Prince Edward, suffered at the hands of his authoritarian father. The future King rebelled and channelled his grandfather's licentious ways, which would be the ruin of the young prince.

The danger of war, revolution and political turmoil dogged King George V's reign, and as World War I loomed, the British monarchy faced the very real threat of abolition. Yet, unlike his cousins in Russia and Germany, George V succeeded in steadying the ship. Renaming the family from the Germanic Saxe-Coburg and Gotha to the name of Windsor cemented the family as decidedly British.

By his Silver Jubilee, George had become one of Britain's most popular kings, and in his radio broadcast on 6 May 1935 he thanked his nation for their loyalty, devoting his remaining years to serving his people. Terminally ill, he only lived for another few months, passing away in January 1936.

Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon

b.1900-d.2002

Smiling Duchess

Born to nobility in 1900, Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon was destined for greatness. The ninth of ten children, she was intelligent and excelled at literature.

She was only 14 years old when WWI broke out. Like families across Europe, her elder brothers enlisted in the war effort, but the Bowes-Lyons were not fortunate enough to escape tragedy. In 1915, her brother, Fergus, was killed at the Battle of Loos, while another brother, Michael, was caught by enemy soldiers and held as a prisoner of war until 1918. At home, Elizabeth and her family did what they could to support the war. The family house, Glamis Castle, was turned into a home for wounded soldiers, and it was here that Elizabeth helped by nursing and chatting with soldiers. She was renowned for her kindness, and was adored by all she treated.

Aged 18 when the war ended, Elizabeth had caught the eye of Prince Albert, Duke of York, and second in line to the British throne after his elder brother, Edward. For Albert it was love at first sight. In 1921 he proposed to Elizabeth, but she turned him down, claiming that she feared the prospect of never being able to act as herself ever again. Heartbroken, Albert testified to his mother, Mary of Teck, that he would never marry anyone else. Indeed, when the Queen went to visit Elizabeth after Albert's proposal, she agreed that the two would make a perfect match - yet she vowed that she wouldn't interfere.

Determined to win her heart, Albert proposed again in 1922, but was met with the same less-than-satisfactory reply: no. Yet, in 1923, persistence finally paid off for Albert. Elizabeth agreed to marry him, and the two were wed on the 26 April that year at Westminster Abbey. In an unprecedented act, as she left the abbey after the ceremony, she set her bouquet upon the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior, a memorial for all the unknown British soldiers buried across Europe. She must have thought of her brother, Fergus, who was poignantly missing from, so far, the most important day of her life. It has become a tradition for brides married at Westminster Abbey to leave their bouquets on the tomb.

Married life suited Elizabeth - as a newly royal family member, she welcomed her new duties with grace, and in return she was greeted fondly by the public. In one event in Fiji, 1927, she had been shaking hands with officials when a stray dog joined the queue. Not missing a beat, the Duchess of York took up the dog's paw and shook it, too. This humorous, approachable demeanour contrasted with the current Queen's cool aloofness, and she quickly picked up the sobriquet, the 'Smiling Duchess'.

When King Edward VIII abdicated in 1936 the throne was left to Albert. Edward had been popular, and his abdication left a bitter taste in the public's mouth. But the

> “She was renowned for her kindness, and was adored by all she treated”

new monarchs proved their worth. Upon the declaration of war in 1939, Elizabeth refused to leave London, insisting that the family would stay in the city for the duration. Nights were passed at Windsor Castle, but when not visiting hospitals, factories and bombed areas, the day was spent at Buckingham Palace. Aware of her increasing popularity, Hitler once referred to her as “the most dangerous woman in Europe”.

Albert passed away 6 February 1952, leaving his eldest daughter as Queen, and his own queen a widow. Elizabeth continued her role as Queen Mother, but faced health problems of her own. In early 1966 she had her appendix removed, and before the year was out she had a tumour removed having been diagnosed with colon cancer. In 1984 he had another brush with cancer, after having a lump removed from her breast.

Her death in 2002, mere weeks after her youngest daughter Margaret’s, was a blow to Windsors and the public alike. Unlike other royals, the Queen Mother had remained a constant favourite for the nation.

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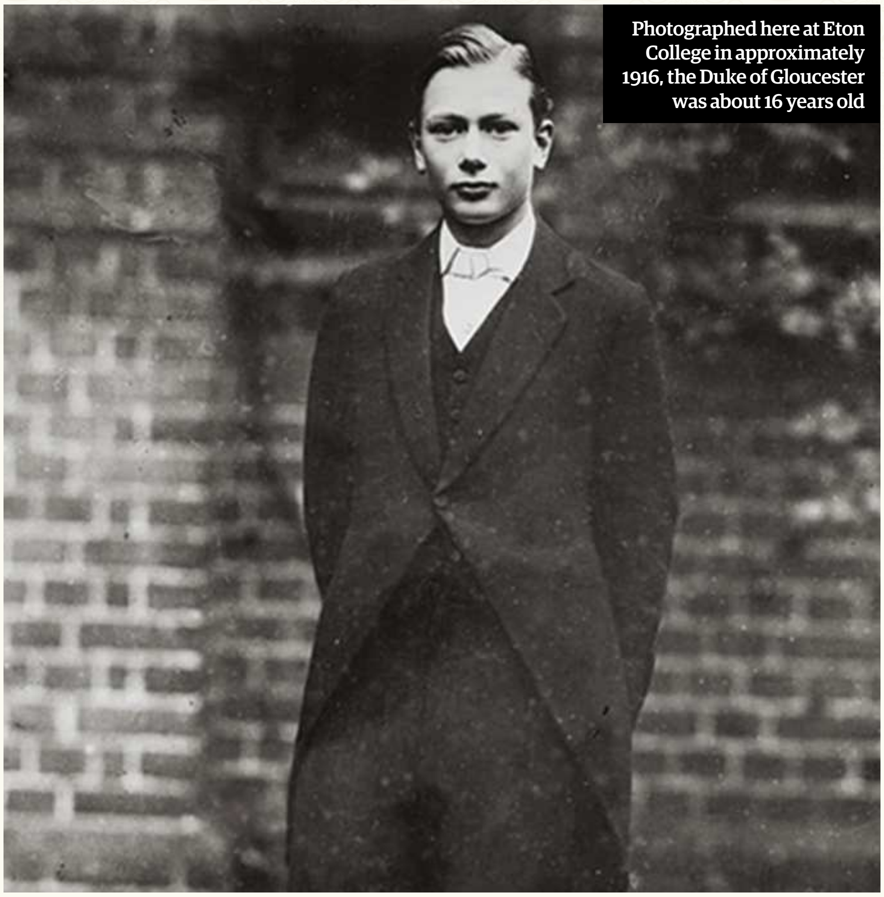
A 1925 portrait of Elizabeth, Duchess of York. A year later, she gave birth to her first child, Princess Elizabeth



Photographed here at Eton College in approximately 1916, the Duke of Gloucester was about 16 years old

Prince Henry, Duke of Gloucester

b.1900-d.1974

Regent in waiting

The third son of the future King George V, Prince Henry suffered at the hands of his disciplinarian father, much like his other siblings. Born in 1900, his childhood was plagued with illness. He was made to wear leg splints for his knocked knees, and much like his elder brother, Albert, he suffered from rhotacism, a speech impediment that meant that he couldn’t pronounce his Rs.

At his childhood home, York Cottage, his health continued to decline - yet in an unprecedented move, Henry became the first son of a British monarch to be sent to school. Here, his health improved and he began to enjoy life. He may not have been academic, but he certainly loved football; Mary of Teck replied to one of his letters to complain: “All you write about is your everlasting football of which I am heartily sick.”

By 1919, Henry - previously small and frail - was the tallest and broadest of all the brothers. By 1928 he was exceedingly handsome, and on a hunting trip to Africa he started an affair with married Beryl Markham. Henry returned to Britain with her after he was called back due to his father’s poor health, and the relationship shocked the Queen. To keep them apart, George V organised a world tour, sending Henry to Japan, Australia and New Zealand. The affair ended, and Henry married Lady Alice Montagu Douglas Scott in 1935.

After George V’s death and the Abdication Crisis of 1936, a Regency Act was announced in 1937, which declared that Prince Henry would act as regent for Princess Elizabeth, should the new King George VI die before his heir’s 18th birthday.

Later in life, Henry’s health deteriorated again. He suffered several strokes, leaving him unable to speak. Upon hearing the news of the death of their son, William, Alice decided against telling her husband, fearing it would make him worse. However, she assumed that he found out through media coverage. He died in 1974.

Prince John

b.1905-d.1919

The forgotten prince

The sixth and final child of George V and Mary of Teck, Prince John has slipped through the pages of history, the often-forgotten child of a king and his consort. Born on 12 July 1905, he was sixth in line to the throne after his father and four elder brothers. His childhood at Sandringham was a happy one, with no sign of any trouble to come. His grandmother described Prince John and his elder brother, George, as "both charming and very amusing," and the Prince was known for his affectionate, if not somewhat mischievous nature.

Yet when the young prince turned four, it became abundantly clear that he wasn't well. He suffered an epileptic fit - the first of many that would devastate his life. Alongside his epilepsy, Prince John was also showing signs of autism, exhibiting repetitive behaviour and a disobedient nature that couldn't be quelled through usual punishment.

As Prince John grew older, his epilepsy and apparent autism grew worse and worse, and the young prince was seen less frequently at royal events. Epilepsy was severely misunderstood; it was seen as a mental illness, and the stigma that went alongside it was one that the Windsors couldn't bear. As John's elder brother, George, was sent to school, it was announced that Prince John would remain at the family home to be tutored there.

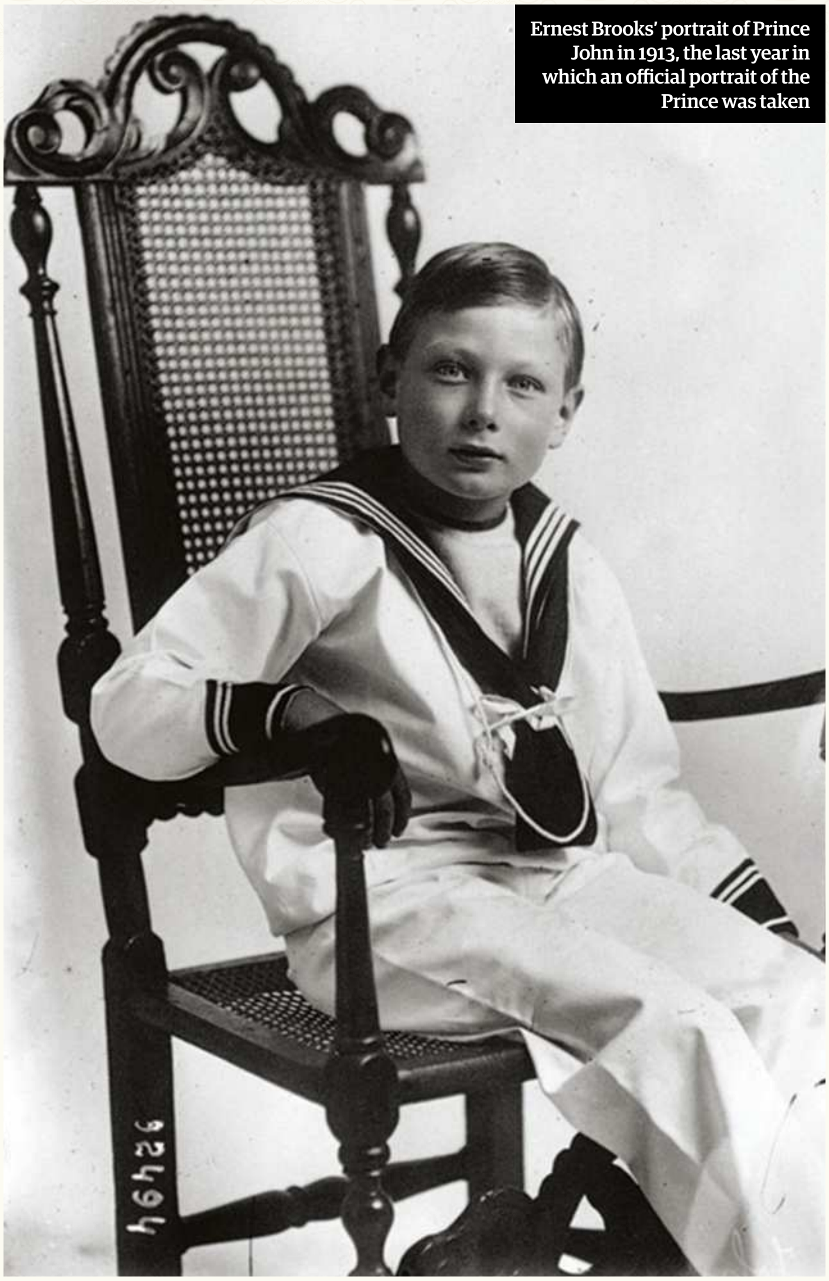
Yet his epilepsy did not improve. By 1917 Prince John was moved to Wood Farm on the Sandringham Estate, where he lived in seclusion until his death a mere two years later. Since the start of World War I, John very rarely saw his parents, and his nanny Charlotte 'Lala' Bill was given complete charge of his care. In 1916 Queen Alexandra, George V's mother, wrote to Mary of Teck that John was "longing for a companion" at Wood Farm, so Mary arranged for her son to spend time with local children. His closest friend became Winifred Thomas, the two spending their time walking and playing.

Contrary to the misconception that John was lonely, isolated and marginalised, he received many other guests than just his playmates. His brothers and sister would visit him, while his parents too ensured that he spend time with them. In 1918, he spent Christmas with his family, only returning to Wood Farm late at night.

Tragedy struck on 18 January 1919, when Prince John, now aged 13, suffered a catastrophic epileptic fit and died in his sleep. Though his physicians had predicted that the Prince wouldn't survive until adulthood, his death, nevertheless, came as a great shock. His funeral was attended not just by the family, but by villagers and Sandringham staff.

Yet even within the royal family, emotions were divided about the death of Prince John. His eldest brother, Prince Edward, cruelly wrote to a mistress that his brother's confinement had turned him into "more of an animal than anything else," concluding that "he was only a brother in blood and nothing else". John's mother, however, was much more affected by her son's death. After his funeral, Mary wrote in her diary that she would "miss the dear child very much indeed". As tragic his death was, it was considered "the greatest mercy possible" by his father, King George V.

He had been an affectionate, loving child and in death he was sorely missed. Mary of Teck gave Prince John's childhood friend, Winifred Thomas, a collection of the Prince's books, with the inscription, "In memory of our dear little Prince". His nanny kept a picture of him on her mantelpiece, with a framed letter from the boy alongside it, reading, "Nanny, I love you".


Ernest Brooks' portrait of Prince John in 1913, the last year in which an official portrait of the Prince was taken

> "He had been an affectionate child and in death he was sorely missed"

© Getty images

This coloured photograph was originally taken by Dorothy Wilding in 1952

Queen Elizabeth II

b.1926-now ♛ 1952-now

Long may she reign

Princess Elizabeth was never intended to rule Britain. Born in 1926 to the second-in-line, she enjoyed a relatively carefree childhood, free from the strict royal protocol and nannying that hounded heirs. By all accounts, Princess Elizabeth was a funny and high-spirited child, who revelled in jokes and stories.

When 1936 brought about the abdication of King Edward VIII, Elizabeth's life took an incredible turn. Suddenly, as her father ascended the throne, Elizabeth became the heir presumptive. Aged just ten, her world changed forever. Like her father, Elizabeth had high expectations of what a monarchy should look and act like. The prospect of becoming queen, while daunting, imbued the young princess with a sense of duty for her country - a commitment that has never waned during her entire reign.

In 1939, Elizabeth met Philip Mountbatten, the handsome 18-year-old naval officer. They wrote to each other for the duration of the war, and were married as soon as Princess Elizabeth turned 21 in 1947. As Britain was still recovering from war, the young princess saved up ration coupons to buy the material for her wedding dress.

During war, Elizabeth was determined to play a significant role. In 1945, she joined the Auxiliary Territorial Service and received her training in mechanics and became a fully qualified driver.

Upon her father's death in 1952, Elizabeth became Queen aged 25. Since then, she has actively maintained international relations and represented Britain. Nearly 65 years on, she still boasts the same sense of humour that won over the British public, featuring in the 2012 London Olympics Opening Ceremony with James Bond. On 9 September 2012 she pipped Queen Victoria as the longest-serving British monarch. In 2016 she celebrated her 90th birthday, with festivities taking place across the country.

Prince William of Gloucester

b.1941-d.1972

Dying to win

Like his uncle, King Edward VIII, Prince William of Gloucester's love life scandalised the Windsors. Falling head over heels in love with a highly unsuitable woman, the young man never knew what the outcome of his illicit love would be, for he tragically died in 1972, aged 30.

His childhood had been a remarkably normal one. Born to Prince Henry and his wife, Alice, on 18 December 1941, war was still raging on across Europe, and the newborn's christening location was kept secret. After war ended, William acted as one of the page boys at Princess Elizabeth and Philip Mountbatten's wedding in 1947. At the age of 18, William left Eton College to study at Cambridge University, where he graduated three years later with a Bachelor of Arts in history. He followed this up with a year at Stanford University, where he focused on business, politics and American history.

Returning to Britain, he took up a civil service job and was posted in the British Embassies of both Lagos and Tokyo. Before taking up his position in Tokyo in 1968, he learnt that he suffered from porphyria - an illness thought to have plagued Mary, Queen of Scots and George III among others.

Despite his respectable profession, William's personal life in Tokyo caused controversy. His relationship with Zsuzsi Starkloff, a divorced Hungarian model with two children, brought back horrible memories of Edward VIII's infatuation with Wallis Simpson. Despite the parallels, William continued the relationship until one day it was brought to a grinding halt.

On 28 August 1972, William - a passionate, qualified aviator - took part in the Goodyear International Air Trophy. Upon take-off, his plane became out of control and crashed in front of 30,000 spectators. His body was recovered after the fire was quelled over two hours later.

Prince William of Gloucester, photographed on the grounds of his family home in Peterborough in 1962

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Diana, Princess of Wales

b.1961-d.1997

England's rose

The death of Diana, Princess of Wales, in 1997 devastated Britain. Much like later tragedies that marked a turning point in history, most Brits can name exactly where they were when they found out that Princess Diana had died.

From the start, her life had been wrought by heartbreak. Born to Edward Spencer and his then-wife, Frances, in Sandringham in 1961, Diana's parents divorced when she was just seven years old in 1969, with the young Diana brought up with her mother in London for a while. Soon, her father sought custody of Diana and her three siblings, and from this point Diana's childhood was spent between London, Northamptonshire, and Scotland. It was a tumultuous period that wasn't helped by Spencer's new wife and the children's new stepmother, Raine, Countess of Dartmouth, with whom none of the children got on with.

Similarly, school proved difficult for Diana. While she excelled at swimming, diving and music, she struggled academically and left without any formal qualifications to her name. In 1978 she went to a finishing school in Switzerland, but she only lasted one term there and soon returned to London. Back in England, she worked several low-paying jobs to make ends meet, including cleaning, teaching dance, and nannying to wealthy Americans.

A year later, Diana met Prince Charles. Having broken off his relationship with Camilla Shand (later Camilla Parker-Bowles) in 1973 due to her desire to settle down, Prince Charles had been linked to several women, and was then dating Diana's sister, Sarah. While this meeting came to nothing, it was in 1980 when Charles considered Diana as a potential bride. The two began a relationship, which quickly escalated to an engagement announcement on 24 February 1981.

With her betrothal to the future king of England secure, Diana moved from her modest flat in Earls Court, London, to Clarence House. On 29 July 1981 the couple married at St Paul's Cathedral as 600,000 people lined the streets of London to watch.

After the wedding, the couple moved into Kensington Palace, and merely months later Diana's pregnancy was announced. On 21 June 1982, Prince William was born. Two years later on 15 September 1984 she gave birth to her second son, Prince Henry - known as Harry. Despite two children, the marriage of Charles and Diana was far from happy. Both had started affairs - Charles had rekindled his flame with his ex-girlfriend, the now-married Camilla Parker-Bowles, while Diana was linked with Major James Hewitt. Despite the devastation at the incompatibility of her marriage, Diana found solace in raising her sons. William and Harry were encouraged to enjoy normal experiences. As well as visiting Disney World, the boys were taken to meet the poorest of society, which has undoubtedly shaped their development into compassionate, caring royals.

By December 1992 it was announced that Prince Charles and Diana were to separate, and a year later Diana explained that she would withdraw from the public eye. In 1995 she revealed that throughout her life she'd suffered from depression, self-harm and bulimia. By 1996 the divorce was official.

A year later, tragedy struck. A car crash in a road tunnel in Paris led to the deaths of Diana, her companion Dodi Fayed, and her chauffeur, Henri Paul. She was mourned internationally, and her funeral showed the depth of despair that the British public felt. Her legacy as the people's princess lives on, and to this day her sons channel the compassion and care that she became so renowned for.

© Getty images

Princess Diana at a state dinner in Canberra, Australia, in November 1985

> "Diana shaped their development into compassionate, caring royals"

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Newlywed Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge, travels down The Mall en route to Buckingham Palace on 29 April 2011

Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge

b.1982-now

Queen of hearts

The rise of Catherine Middleton captured the imagination of the British public, and with good reason: a 'commoner' hadn't married into British royalty since Elizabeth Woodville's secret nuptials with Edward IV. With no aristocratic titles and a decidedly middle-class background, Catherine's rise to power was like something out of a fairy tale.

Born to Michael and Carole Middleton – who'd originally met when she was an air hostess and he was a flight dispatcher – Catherine's childhood was a normal one in Berkshire, England. After school, she studied art history at the University of St Andrews in Scotland, where she met Prince William in 2001. Though the two dated for several years at university, they broke up in 2007. The break-up wasn't to last, however, and the couple reunited shortly after. In October 2010, Catherine and William became engaged, with the Prince giving his fiancée the engagement ring that had belonged to Diana, Princess of Wales. Merely months later, the couple was married in a lavish ceremony at Westminster Abbey. The wedding was broadcast internationally, with around 300 million people across the globe tuning in to watch the event.

It was this wedding which triggered a question about British succession. According to British law, a son would be prioritised over an elder daughter for the throne. In December, after Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge, revealed her pregnancy, it was announced that absolute primogeniture would be adopted, enabling the eldest child to take the throne, regardless of gender. Months later, on 22 July 2013 Prince George Alexander Louis was born. Just under two years later, on 4 May 2015, Catherine gave birth to Princess Charlotte Elizabeth Diana and on 23 April 2018 the couple's third child, Prince Louis Arthur Charles, was born.

Harry, Duke of Sussex

b.1984-now

Soldier in arms

Despite falling down the line of succession after the birth of his nephews and niece, Harry's dedication to his royal duties continues to grow.

Prince Henry Albert Charles David, as he was officially named, was born on 15 September 1984. Along with his brother, William, he experienced more than most royals during their upbringing. Devoted to charity work, Diana made sure that her sons experienced what life could be like for the least fortunate, while they also had their fair share of 'normal' childhood experiences: they were both taken to Disney World and experienced the joys of McDonald's.

Their mother's death in 1997 was a huge blow, and the boys walked behind her coffin on the day of her funeral. Her legacy has lived on in her sons, however, and the two are advocates and patrons to many charities that support a range of causes.

In 2005, Harry joined the army, where he rapidly excelled through the ranks. In 2007, Harry was scheduled to be deployed to Iraq, but fears that he would become a prime target saw him pulled from the brigade. Later he was secretly deployed to Afghanistan, but his cover was blown by an Australian newspaper and he was swiftly removed.

Several causes remain close to Harry's heart. He founded the Invictus Games in 2014, which pits injured service personnel against each other in a test of sporting ability. His active involvement in several charities has seen awareness soar – his HIV test in July 2016 had a huge impact on increasing tests, while his campaign on mental health with William and Catherine, Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, is battling the stigma of mental illnesses.

In May 2018, Harry married American actress Meghan Markle. Following the birth of their son, Archie, in May 2019, the couple stepped down from royal duties a year later.

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A 2014 capture of Prince Harry at a Remembrance Sunday service held in Kandahar, Afghanistan

© Getty images

Under the guidance of the Monegasque monarchs, Monaco has been described as the "playground of the rich and famous"

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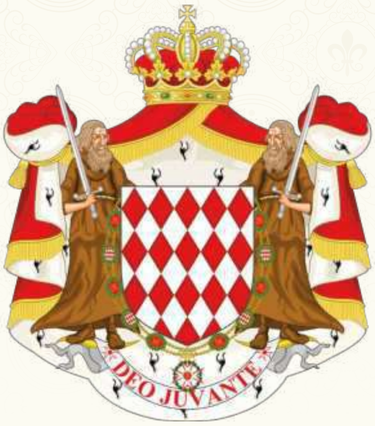

GRIMALDI

1297-present

The glamourous and controversial dynasty that turned Monaco into a glittering principality

Words KATHARINE MARSH & JUNE WOOLERTON

In 1297, Francesco Grimaldi stormed the Rock of Monaco, killing heretics and witches as he went. But one of them fought back - a witch cursed the new ruler and all of his descendants with bad luck, and it seems to have stuck even over 700 years later. Divorce and premature death have played a part in the Grimaldi legacy over the centuries, and the sorrow would strike again in 1982.

The person people arguably most associate with the House of Grimaldi is the American actress Grace Kelly, who gave up her life and career to become princess consort of Monaco on the arm of Prince Rainier III. After 26 years of marriage, she tragically died while driving in Monaco, with one of her daughters in the front seat. Princess Grace, one of Monaco's most beloved royals, was gone, and the whole country was heartbroken. It seemed the curse had struck again, as it would go on to do with Grace's own children.

But the House of Grimaldi should be remembered for more than its tragic past. The nation it has ruled for centuries is a land filled with glitz and glamour, littered with casinos and breathtaking views of the French Riviera. Under the guidance of its royal family it has survived, even flourished, and although the principality is now under a constitutional monarchy, the prince of Monaco does wield some political power.

The wealth of the nation is reflected in the wealth of Albert II, the current prince of Monaco, who is currently one of the richest royals in the world. Despite the diminutive size of the state, the Monegasque court is renowned for its opulence, with the dynasty making its home at the Prince's Palace, a Genoese fortress dating back to the end of the 12th century.

The Prince's Palace of Monaco is home to the House of Grimaldi

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Francesco Grimaldi, the man who caused the alleged Grimaldi curse

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The PEDIGREE

Stretching back across 13 generations, the Grimaldi royal family is full of fame, wealth and scandal

Order of succession

Marriage

"Deo Juvante"
'With God's help'

Grimaldi family motto

1

1604-1662

Honoré II
b.1597-d.1662
Turn to page 122

Ippolita Trivulzio
b.1600-d.1638

Ercole Grimaldi
b.1623-d.1651

Maria Spinola
b.1625-d.1670

2

1662-1701

Louis I
b.1642-d.1701

Catherine de Gramont
b.1639-d.1678
Turn to page 122

3

1701-1731

Antonio I
b.1661-d.1731

Marie de Lorraine
b.1674-d.1724

Antonio bore a son from an affair

Elizabeth Dufort
Dates unknown

Antoine Grimaldi, Chevalier de Grimaldi
b.1697-d.1784

4

1731

Louise Hippolyte, Sovereign Princess
b.1697-d.1731
Turn to page 123

5

1731-1733

Jacques I
b.1689-d.1751

6

1733-1795

Honoré III
b.1720-d.1795

Prince of Monaco for almost 60 years, Honoré spent much of his life in Paris or on the battlefield while his illegitimate uncle, Antoine de Grimaldi, acted as regent. During the French Revolution, Monaco was annexed to France and Honoré was deprived of his titles. He survived but one of his daughter-in-laws was guillotined in the Terror.

Maria Caterina Brignole
b.1737-d.1813

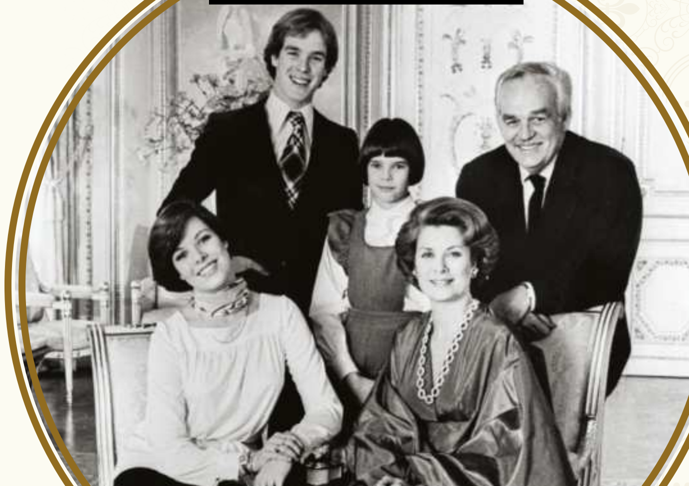
7

1795-1819

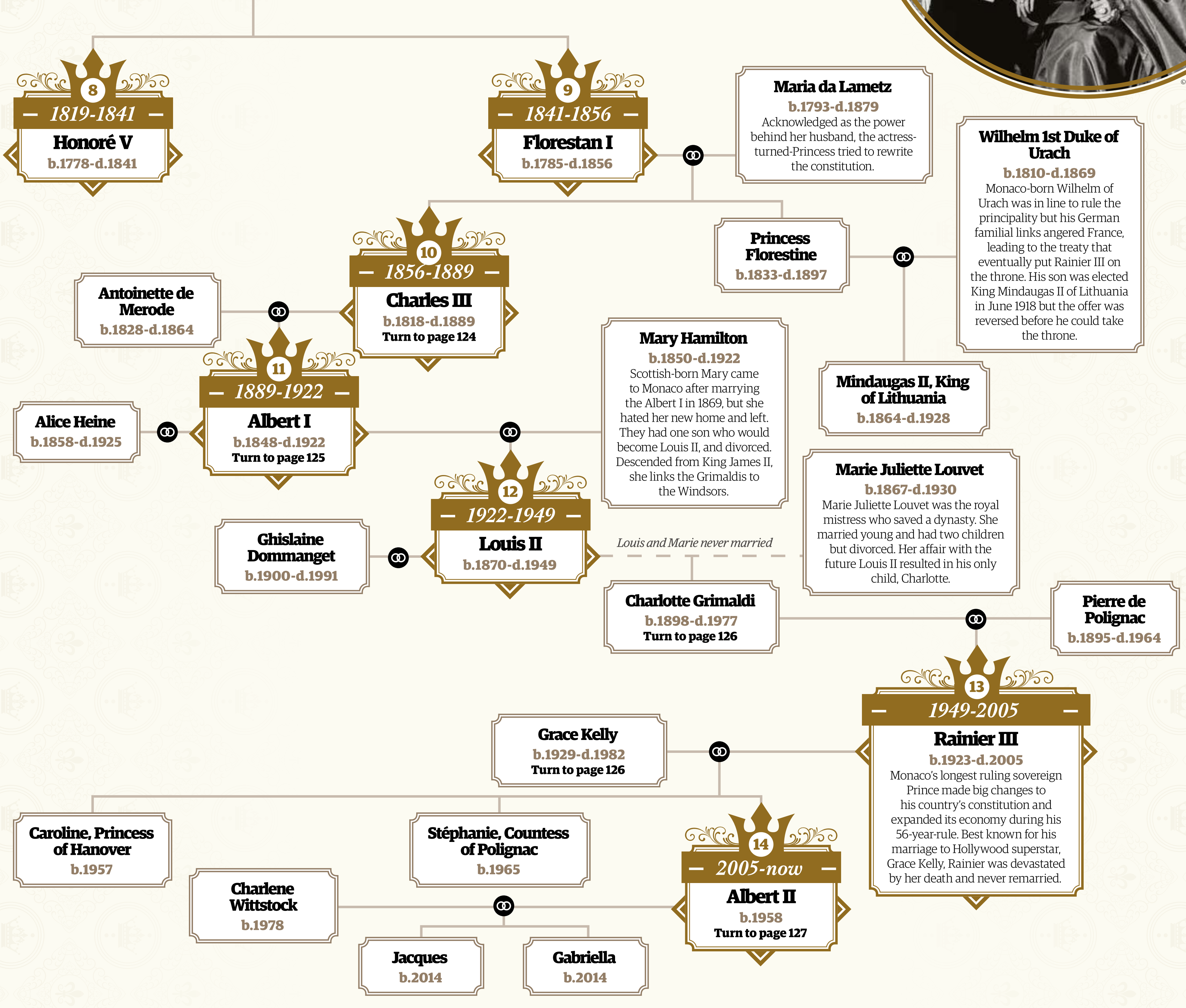
Honoré IV
b.1758-d.1819
Turn to page 124

Louise d'Aumont
b.1759-d.1826

Prince Rainier III and Princess Grace pose with their children Albert, Caroline and Stephanie in April 1976



Grimaldi



8
1819-1841
Honoré V
b.1778-d.1841

9
1841-1856
Florestan I
b.1785-d.1856

Maria da Lametz
b.1793-d.1879
Acknowledged as the power behind her husband, the actress-turned-Princess tried to rewrite the constitution.

10
1856-1889
Charles III
b.1818-d.1889
Turn to page 124

Antoinette de Merode
b.1828-d.1864

Princess Florestine
b.1833-d.1897

Wilhelm 1st Duke of Urach
b.1810-d.1869
Monaco-born Wilhelm of Urach was in line to rule the principality but his German familial links angered France, leading to the treaty that eventually put Rainier III on the throne. His son was elected King Mindaugas II of Lithuania in June 1918 but the offer was reversed before he could take the throne.

Mindaugas II, King of Lithuania
b.1864-d.1928

11
1889-1922
Albert I
b.1848-d.1922
Turn to page 125

Alice Heine
b.1858-d.1925

Mary Hamilton
b.1850-d.1922
Scottish-born Mary came to Monaco after marrying the Albert I in 1869, but she hated her new home and left. They had one son who would become Louis II, and divorced. Descended from King James II, she links the Grimaldis to the Windsors.

12
1922-1949
Louis II
b.1870-d.1949

Ghislaine Dommanget
b.1900-d.1991

Louis and Marie never married

Marie Juliette Louvet
b.1867-d.1930
Marie Juliette Louvet was the royal mistress who saved a dynasty. She married young and had two children but divorced. Her affair with the future Louis II resulted in his only child, Charlotte.

Charlotte Grimaldi
b.1898-d.1977
Turn to page 126

Pierre de Polignac
b.1895-d.1964

13
1949-2005
Rainier III
b.1923-d.2005
Monaco's longest ruling sovereign Prince made big changes to his country's constitution and expanded its economy during his 56-year-rule. Best known for his marriage to Hollywood superstar, Grace Kelly, Rainier was devastated by her death and never remarried.

Grace Kelly
b.1929-d.1982
Turn to page 126

Caroline, Princess of Hanover
b.1957

Stéphanie, Countess of Polignac
b.1965

14
2005-now
Albert II
b.1958
Turn to page 127

Charlene Wittstock
b.1978

Jacques
b.2014

Gabriella
b.2014

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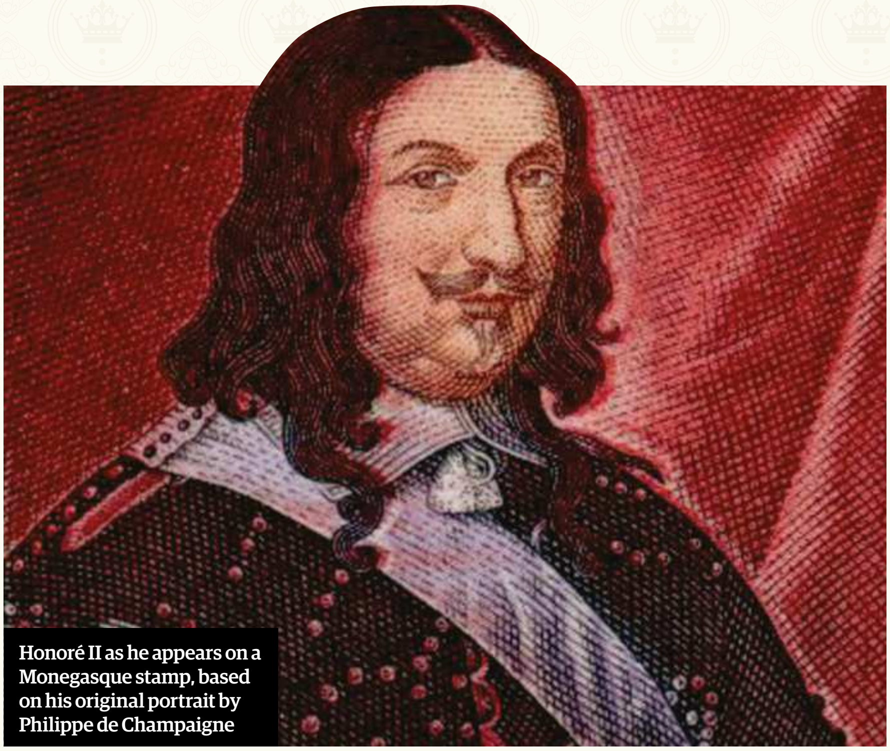

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Honoré II as he appears on a Monegasque stamp, based on his original portrait by Philippe de Champaigne

Honoré II of Monaco

b.1597-d.1662 ♛ 1605-1662

The first Grimaldi Prince

The Grimaldis held Monaco as Lords for centuries, but Honoré turned them into a royal dynasty. The first Grimaldi to officially take the title of Prince ended his reign as a hero of Monaco but his beginnings were far from glorious.

Honoré II inherited Monaco at the age of six when his father was murdered and had to do some skilful behind the scenes bargaining to secure his throne.

His father, Ercole, was known as Lord of Monaco - the title taken by a long line of Grimaldis since they had secured a powerbase in Monaco in 1297 - but the family was often subject to wider politics with powers like Spain, Genoa and France having a heavy influence over Monaco.

Just a year after Honoré became child ruler, his uncle and regent, Federico Landi, allowed Spanish troops to occupy Monaco. Honoré was sent to live in Milan but while he was officially elevated to the rank of Prince by the Spanish, he was making plans to rule without them.

Honoré knew he needed the protection of a bigger nation and began talks with France, ultimately leading to the 1641 Treaty of Peronne. The powers of the Sovereign Prince of Monaco were established while the territory was placed under the French protection. The boy ruler who had been forced to flee his lands was now a Prince in control of his own territories.

Honoré rebuilt the cultural and economic life of Monaco, inviting poets and painters to his home, and developed links with other European royals. He was a popular Prince with an affection for local traditions and beliefs. The cult of St Devota had been popular in the area for years and Honoré made her Monaco's patroness. But tragedy struck when his son and heir, Ercole, was killed in a gun accident. Honoré groomed his grandson, Louis, to take power in his place. When he died, in 1662, he left him not only a royal title but also a powerbase to match.

> "The boy ruler, who was forced to flee, was now a Prince in control"

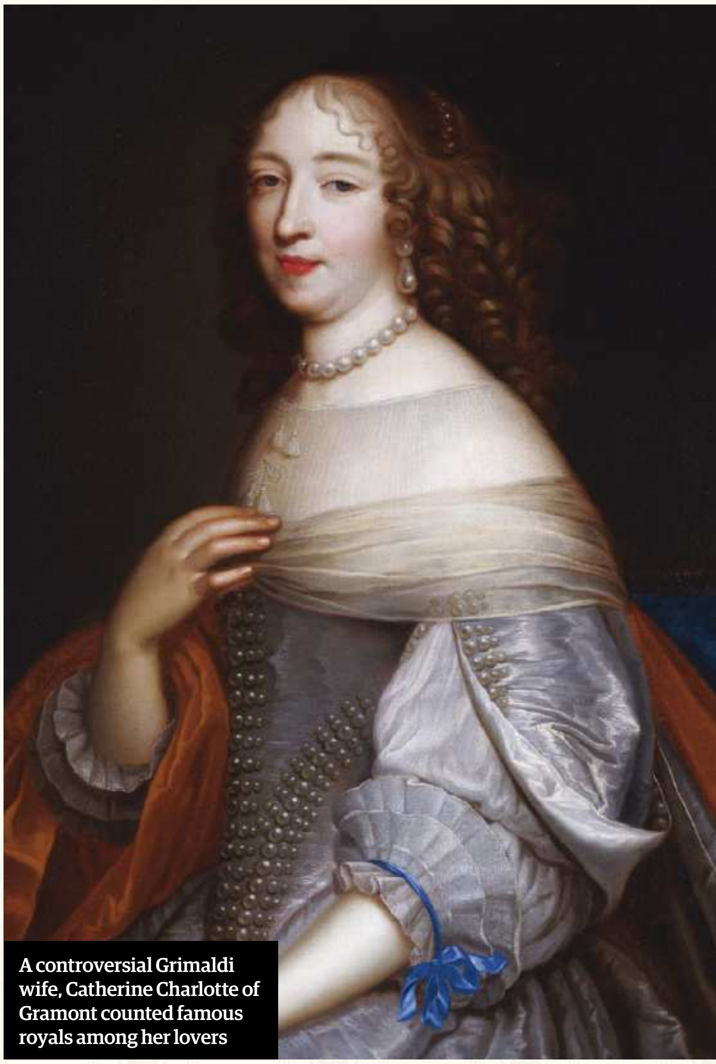
Catherine Charlotte de Gramont

b.1639-d.1678

Princess and royal mistress

Catherine Charlotte de Gramont died young, but in her short life she made quite a name for herself - and not necessarily one she would have wanted. As consort to Prince Louis I of Monaco she was, on paper, a dutiful royal wife, producing six children including a first-born son. In reality, her scandalous behaviour raised many eyebrows but may ultimately have helped her husband consolidate his grip on power.

Catherine Charlotte came from an influential family. Her father, Antoine de Graumont, was Marshal of France and an important courtier and diplomat who later became a Duke, while her mother, Francoise-Marguerite du Plessis,

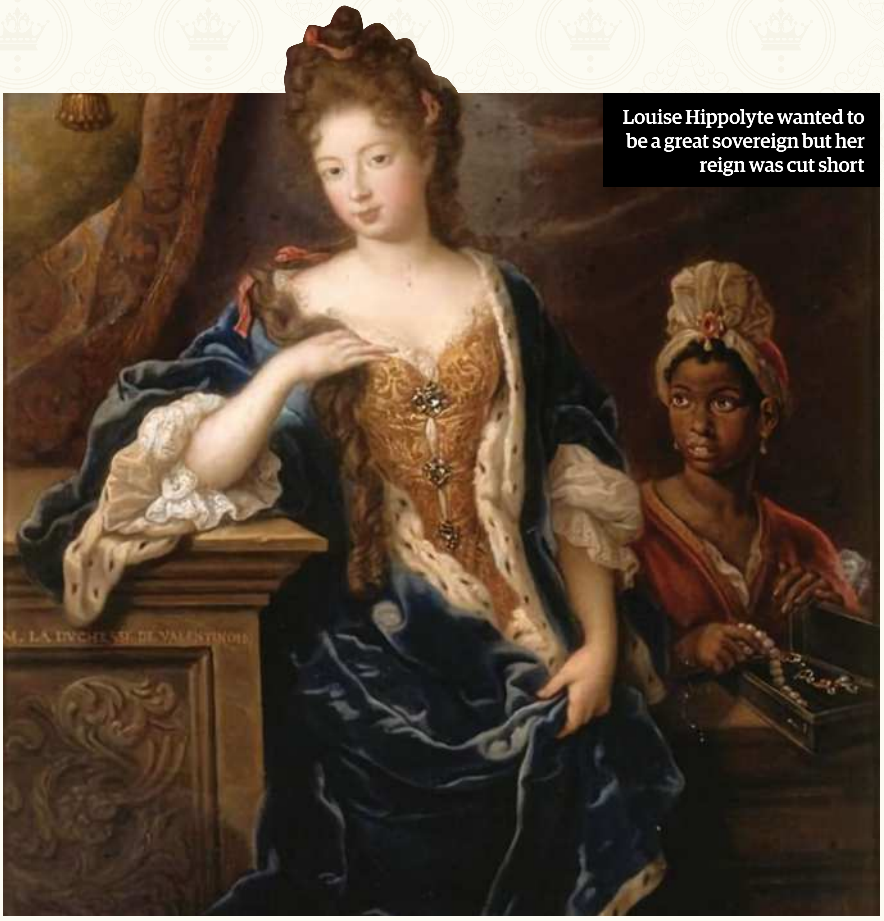


A controversial Grimaldi wife, Catherine Charlotte of Gramont counted famous royals among her lovers was a niece of Cardinal Richelieu. Catherine Charlotte was considered quite a catch for Louis Grimaldi, grandson of Prince Honoré II, who was heir to Monaco's throne when the two wed in 1660. She was described as extremely beautiful as well as clever and witty. Their son, Antoine, was born in 1661 and the couple left Paris for Monaco in 1662 when Louis succeeded to the throne. By 1664, the new Prince and Princess of Monaco had three daughters, but by then Catherine Charlotte was tiring of her new role.

The clever courtier's daughter, who had been raised in the heady world of the Sun King, found life in Monaco rather dull. Her husband, who was a talented soldier, also preferred Paris and so the couple returned there in 1665. Catherine Charlotte was drawn into the intrigues of court life. Within a few short years, she was rumoured to have taken several lovers. Madame de Sévigné, the famous letter writer of the time, described her as "hungry for pleasure". Among her paramours was her cousin, Antoine de Nompar, with whom she'd been linked before her marriage. Louis XIV was less than impressed and Nompar ended up in the Bastille while the Princess Consort of Monaco ended up in the King's bed. But this was far from a simple affair. Catherine Charlotte had been encouraged in this royal scandal by her friend, Henrietta Anne Stuart, daughter of the executed King Charles I of England. Henrietta had been Louis's lover and wanted Catherine Charlotte to tempt him away from his mistress, Louise de Valliere, so that she could win him back herself. The plan failed. When Louis tired of the Princess of Monaco, instead of turning to Henrietta he made the famous Madame de Montespan his mistress.

Catherine Charlotte was even rumoured to have begun a more intimate relationship with Henrietta, but that may have had more to do with the reputations of her friends and family than the actual truth. Catherine Charlotte's brother was Guy Armand, Count of Guiche and one of the most famous playboys of the French court. He had bedded both Henrietta and her husband Philippe of Orleans, brother of Louis XIV. Association with this love triangle did nothing for Catherine Charlotte's reputation and an alleged relationship with the Chevalier de Lorraine, another rumoured lover of Philippe of Orleans, was the final straw. Catherine Charlotte was sent back to Monaco after just three years at court.

The Princess of Monaco's husband was often away fighting while these intrigues unfolded and in 1672, he and his wife were called back to Paris so he could take part in the war against Holland. Henrietta was dead by then and Catherine Charlotte became lady in waiting to the now all-powerful Madame de Montespan. The position allowed Catherine Charlotte to develop useful connections while her husband continued to impress on the battlefield. The Prince and Princess of Monaco may not have won the hearts of their people but they consolidated French favour, vital for the independence of Monaco. Catherine Charlotte died in Paris on 4 June 1678, aged just 39, but her reputation as one of Monaco's most colourful royals remains.


M. LA DUCHESSE DE VALENTINOIS

Louise Hippolyte wanted to be a great sovereign but her reign was cut short

Princess Louise Hippolyte

b.1697-d.1731 ♛ February-December 1731

The only woman to rule Monaco – so far...

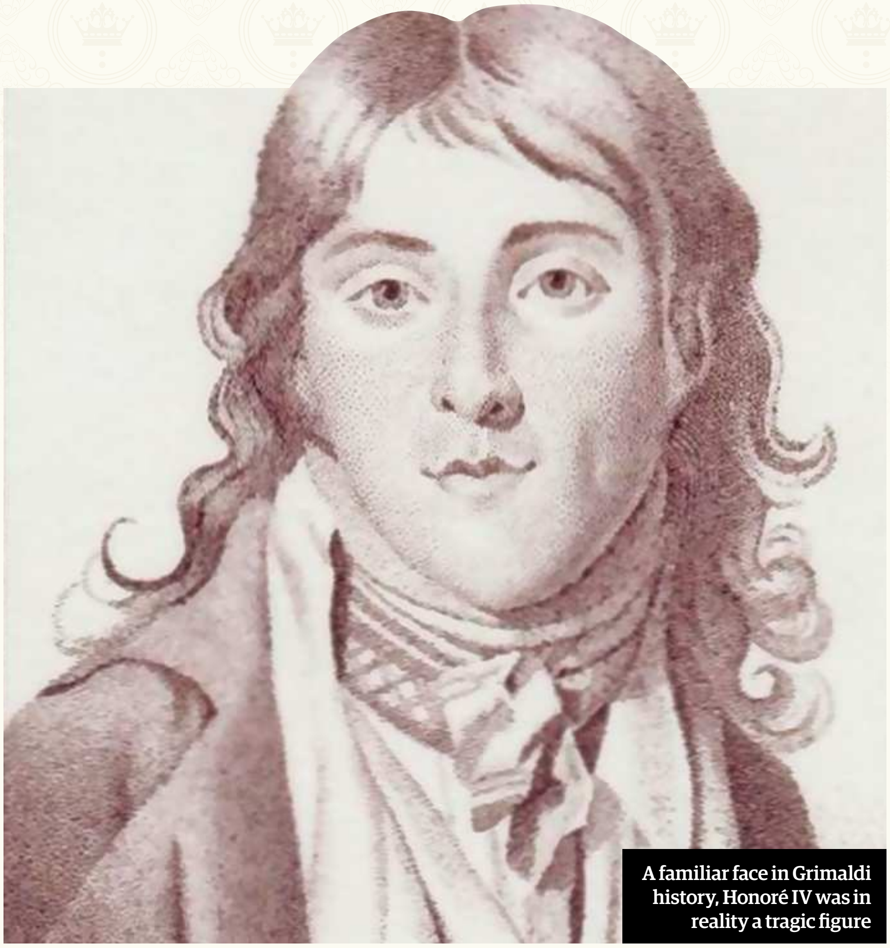
Louise Hippolyte had all the makings of a people's sovereign Princess, but died before she could truly make her mark on Monaco. Popular, caring and spirited, she worked hard to prove that a royal woman didn't need a man to rule for her.

Louise wasn't originally lined up to take the Monegasque throne. The daughter of Antoine I and his wife, Marie de Lorraine-Armagnac, when she was born at the Prince's Palace on 10 November 1697, there was every expectation her parents would one day welcome a son. When it became clear that Louise would succeed, her father wanted her to marry a Grimaldi cousin to keep the family name alive, but they were all too poor.

Louis XIV of France wanted a say too, as Monaco had been a French protectorate for almost 100 years. With the King's backing, Louise married Jacques Goyon de Matginon in 1715 and together they became joint rulers of Monaco, going on to have nine children. Throughout their marriage Jacques pursued many mistresses, all while his wife got ready to rule.

The couple succeeded on 20 February 1731 and Louise travelled to Monaco alone where she was warmly received. She is said to have cherished her people like children and shown determination to be a good ruler. Jacques appeared weeks later to a much frostier welcome. But in December 1731, just as she was beginning to lay the foundations of her reign, Louise was suddenly struck down with smallpox and died. Jacques became hugely unpopular and fled the following summer, abdicating in favour of their young son, Honoré III, in 1733.

Jacques kept the new Prince with him in Paris and Monaco was instead administered for years by Antoine I's illegitimate son, the Chevalier de Grimaldi, born in the same year as Louise. He was talented and popular -- just like his half-sister, Louise Hippolyte, Monaco's only female sovereign.



A familiar face in Grimaldi history, Honoré IV was in reality a tragic figure

Prince Honoré IV

b.1758-d.1819 1795-1819

The Prince broken by the French Revolution

Honoré IV was born at a time of great prosperity for Monaco but his reign would be characterised by poverty and terror. He inherited a realm that had just been abolished and by the time his principality was restored, he was too ill to govern it.

Honoré IV was born in 1758 in Paris, the eldest son of Prince Honoré III of Monaco, and Maria Caterina from the wealthy Brignole-Sale family.

Young Honoré grew up rich; the economy of Monaco was booming. In 1777 he married Louise d'Aumont, heiress to Cardinal Mazarin's great fortune, but when the French Revolution started in 1789, everything changed. The family lost its wealth and in 1793, Monaco was absorbed into France. Their titles were gone but they had much bigger problems. Honoré was imprisoned in the Terror. He survived but his sister-in-law was guillotined.

When his father died in 1795, Honoré IV was nominally Sovereign Prince of Monaco. In reality, he had no principality to rule and his own position was still precarious. His divorce in 1798 and his rapidly declining health left him a lonely and broken figure. He watched his only brother, Joseph, and his eldest son, another Honoré, find success in the Imperial Army under Napoleon while he languished in Paris.

In 1814, the Treaty of Vienna restored Monaco as a principality, but by then Honoré was too ill to govern himself. He was even too broken to effectively appoint regents to rule for him after his death. He first asked Joseph to step in, but when Honoré's son and heir objected, his brother soon stepped aside. For the last five years of his life, Honoré IV watched others rule the realm for which he had once harboured such high hopes. He died in Paris in 1819, still mourning a reign that never was.

Charles III

b.1818-d.1889 1856-1889

The founder of modern Monaco

Charles III may not be the most famous of the Grimaldis, but he created modern Monaco. The son of actors, he played the part of Sovereign Prince to perfection.

He inherited a divided and poor country and turned it into a wealthy magnet for visitors from around the world with a brilliant and daring idea. Charles III is the Prince who built the bank at Monte Carlo.

Charles Honoré Grimaldi was born in Paris on 18 December 1818 and grew up in obscurity while his uncle, Honoré V, ruled Monaco. When Honoré V died childless, in 1841, Charles' father, Florestan, took the throne, but he had been an actor and was soon overwhelmed by his royal role. Charles took on more and more responsibility, alongside his mother Maria Caroline, and finally became Sovereign Prince on his father's death in 1856.

This long, if unexpected, preparation for the throne paid off. Charles, under the guidance of his strong-willed mother, had a clear idea from the off about making Monaco rich and important. He started by giving away most of his land. The towns of Menton and Roquebrune, about four fifths of Monaco's territory, had been rioting for freedom. Charles didn't want to spend time and money quelling them and within five years, he signed them over to France in return for a healthy sum of compensation. He also imposed a sales tax for crossing the French border and began to cultivate important contacts, developing diplomatic relations with several countries and sending a consul to Russia. Charles gambled on acting in the same way as other, more established sovereigns to build Monaco up again and taking a chance would transform the principality forever.

> "The nearby area was named in his honour, it became Monte Carlo"

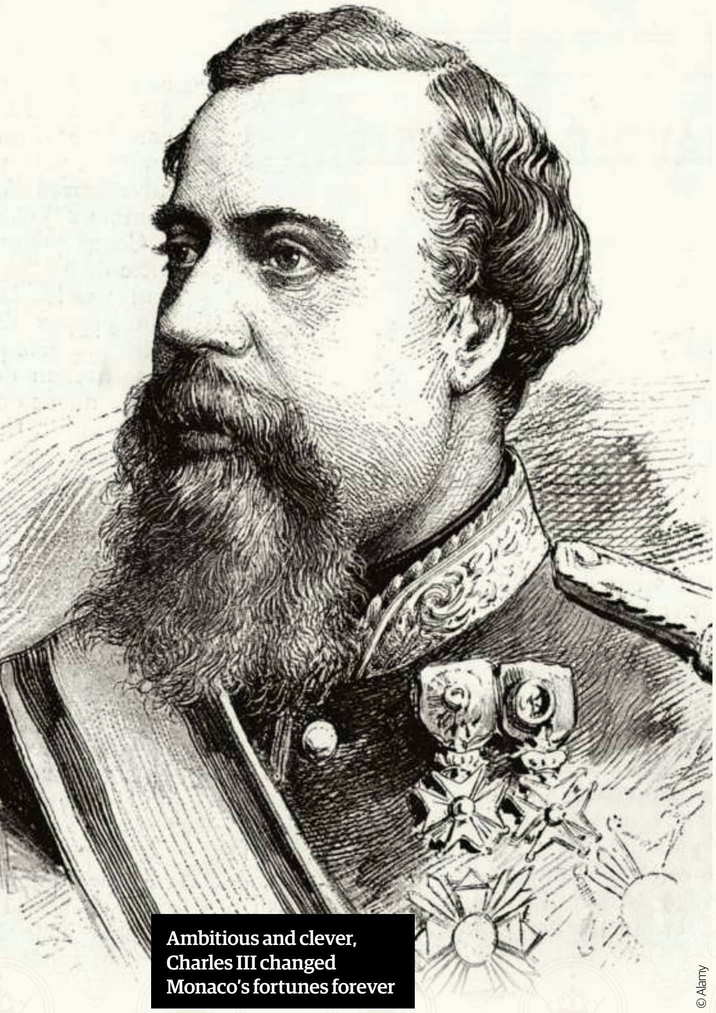
Gambling was facing bans in some parts of Europe, so Charles decided to make it legal in Monaco. Charles and his mother befriended one of the most famous casino owning families on the continent, the Blancs, who were looking for a new outlet. Attracted by the warm weather and royal charm, they set up a casino in 1863, which soon brought wealthy people from across Europe and further afield flooding to Monaco. Within just a few years, the tiny principality was welcoming around 150,000 visitors a year.

The area around the casino was named in honour of the Prince and became Mount Charles or Monte Carlo.

Charles didn't just get prestige from the casino, he got 15 per cent of its profits and suddenly his dreams of rebuilding Monaco became an almost instant reality. He built new rail and road connections to make it easier for tourists to visit and was constantly working to rebuild the infrastructure of Monaco. As the casino grew, hotels sprung up around it and as his reign progressed, Monaco's wealth meant he could reduce or remove taxes for his subjects, making them wealthier too and increasing his popularity. His influence also extended to religion – when the Jesuits complained about the casino, he ended up expelling them and under his rule, Monaco established its own diocese.

Charles gave Monaco its modern image. He approved its flag and its coat of arms, circulated gold coins and issued its first stamps, but he also began a trend, which would cause problems for the Grimaldis. He had married the wealthy Antoinette de Merode in 1846 when both were young but they only had one child, a pattern followed by their son and grandson which led, eventually, to a succession crisis.

Charles III, who died in 1889, began to go blind in his final years, but it was his foresight and visionary ideas that put Monaco on the path to fame and fortune.



Ambitious and clever, Charles III changed Monaco's fortunes forever

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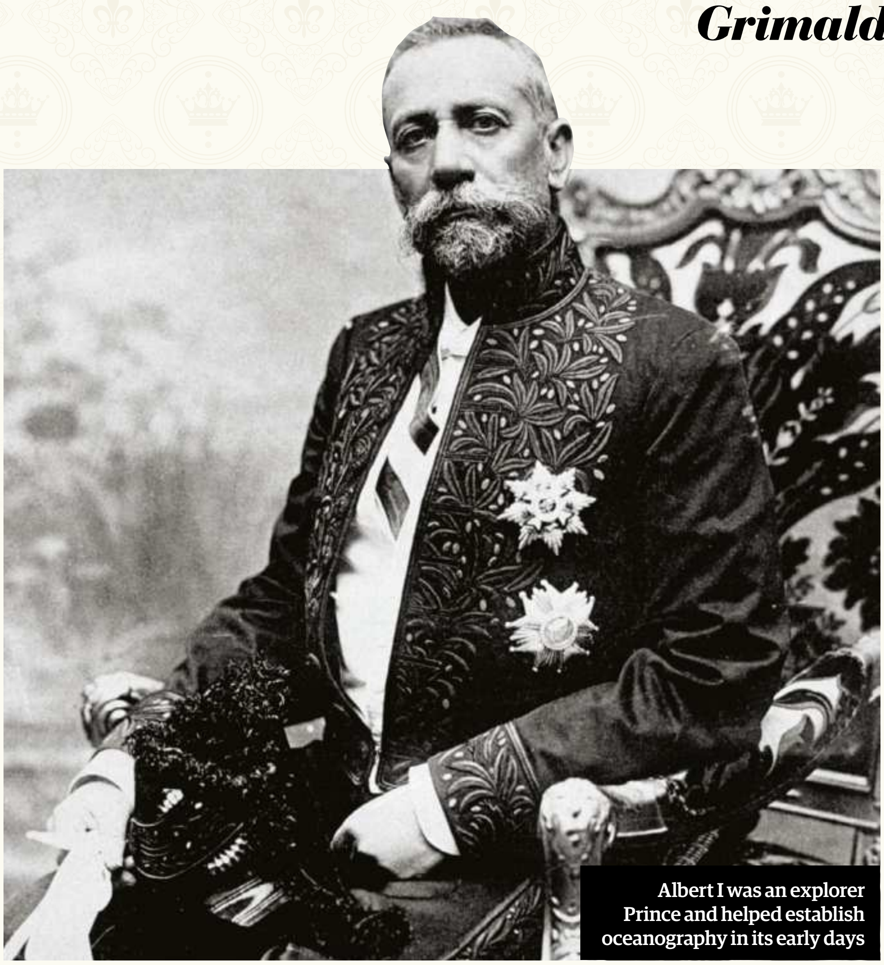

Albert I was an explorer Prince and helped establish oceanography in its early days

Albert I

b.1848-d.1922 ♛ 1889-1922

A sailor Prince who tried to stop WWI

Albert I became famous for his love of the sea but his reign sailed in dangerously choppy waters more than once. An able politician, he tried to boost Monaco's economy but also faced popular protests and came close to being toppled. He argued for peace as Europe faced war but would see other thrones fall while stabilising his own.

When Albert Honoré Charles arrived on 13 November 1848, he became the first Grimaldi for several generations to be born to rule. His early life followed the traditional pattern for a future sovereign: a fine education and military service. Albert loved the sea and served with the Spanish and French navies. He took up the relatively new science of oceanography and carried out dozens of expeditions, including trips to the Arctic. Later he would establish the Oceanographic Institute of Monaco.

His accession in 1889 made him an absolute ruler and as the 20th century dawned, that caused problems. Many in Monaco resented Albert's power. When unemployment went up, there were protests that led straight to the Prince's Palace. The result was Albert giving Monaco a constitution. The same year, 1911, he established the Monte Carlo rally in an attempt to bring more tourism to his country. He also set up the International Institute of Peace to try to arbitrate in the disputes that eventually started World War I in 1914.

His common sense and hard work helped him win the respect of his people, but his personal life was less successful. He married twice but spent his later years alone. His first wife had been Lady Mary Victoria Hamilton, who left him soon after the birth of their son, while his second marriage to American-born Marie Alice Heine also ended in separation. When Albert died in Paris in 1922, he left a throne more stable than it had been for years. The Prince born to rule had ensured the power of the Grimaldi for years to come.

Princess Charlotte of Monaco

b.1898-d.1977

The dynasty-saving illegitimate daughter

© Topfoto

Charlotte's path to royal recognition was fraught, but she was a colourful Princess who made her mark

Charlotte of Monaco's life was rarely what it seemed. She was heir to the throne for more than 20 years but was rejected as a royal descendant in her early years. Part of one of the most glamorous royal couples in the world, she was unhappy behind closed doors. Even in her later years, she was raising eyebrows. But without her, the Grimaldis might have lost Monaco forever.

In May 1919, the succession rights of Charlotte Grimaldi were finally recognised and she was given a title long associated with Monaco's royals: Duchess of Valentinois. But Charlotte was no baby: she was about to turn 21.

At the time of her birth on 30 September 1898 in Algeria, Charlotte Louise Juliette Louvet had been the illegitimate daughter of Monaco's heir, Louis, and a sometime actress, Marie Juliette Louvet. Her paternal grandfather, Albert I, was less than keen on his son's new family but when a succession crisis loomed, Charlotte turned into Princess material. A controversial law to acknowledge her as Louis's child was deemed invalid, so another was passed, allowing her father to formally adopt her. By the time Louis became Sovereign Prince in 1922, Charlotte was fully recognised as his legal heir and was fast turning into one of the most famous royals in the world.

> "She remained a glamorous figure until her death in 1977"

That was partly due to her 1920 marriage to Count Pierre de Polignac, the handsome and energetic descendant of a famous French noble family. They were instant celebrities and the birth of two beautiful children, Antoinette and Rainier, only increased their glamour, but they were miserable with each other and divorced in 1933. Eleven years later, Charlotte decided to give up the rights to the throne that had caused so much debate and handed the succession to her son, Rainier.

When he succeeded in 1949, she went to live on the Grimaldi estate outside Paris, turning part of it into a rehabilitation centre for former criminals. She remained a glamorous figure and on her death in 1977, left an impressive collection of royal jewellery to her granddaughter, Princess Caroline. Her granddaughter would later name her elder daughter Charlotte, ensuring the influence of the lively fairy-tale royal who almost ruled Monaco lives on in the 21st century.

Princess Grace of Monaco

b.1929-d.1982

From film star to fairy-tale royal

Grace Kelly's transformation from film star to Princess Consort was played out in front of a worldwide audience of millions. Her love story with Prince Rainier III and their wedding in 1956 were global media events as well as milestones in the history of Monaco that made the bride a royal icon. But Grace Kelly was always the bigger name in this royal love match and because of her, Monaco's monarchs became some of the most famous in the world.

By the time she met Rainier at a press call during the 1955 Cannes Film Festival, Grace was already Hollywood royalty. That same year she won the Best Actress Oscar for her part in The Country Girl and although she'd only been making movies since 1951, she had been in some of the biggest films of the decade, including High Noon and Dial M For Murder. Grace Kelly was the star of the day, a leading lady for legendary director Alfred Hitchcock and box office magic. Rainier had been Sovereign Prince of Monaco since 1949 and was nowhere near as well known internationally, but he was smitten and the two kept in touch. Their engagement led to a media frenzy, with thousands waving Grace off as she set sail for her new home. Everything this glamorous royal couple did became headline news and 30 million people watched them say "I do" at their religious wedding in Monaco on 19 April 1956. In the congregations were film stars including Cary Grant and David Niven, as well as royal and aristocratic guests. The wedding dress, made by Hollywood designer Helen Rose, became an instant classic and transformed Grace into a picture perfect Princess.

In some ways, Grace Patricia Kelly was hardly traditional consort material. Born in Philadelphia on 12 November 1929, she was the daughter of Irish American John Kelly, a sports star-turned-businessman, and Margaret Majer who had enjoyed a ground-breaking career as a sports instructor. Grace had defied their expectations to pursue an acting career and worked as a model to support herself. She was also well educated and had been raised a Catholic, the religion of Monaco. Rainier's choice of bride was seen as one of the most brilliant royal matches of modern times. When she gave birth to a daughter followed by a son and heir within two years of her marriage, her place as an ideal consort was assured. Another daughter followed later and Grace's royal family became global celebrities.

Grace initially embraced the traditional role of a Princess, throwing herself into royal public life. She was an instant fashion icon, inspiring thousands across the world, but Grace's heart and focus was always on her charity work. She set up an association for children's rights, organised events for disadvantaged young people and supported the arts. But she missed her career and toyed with returning to the screen until popular opposition ended her dreams. In the 1960s, she narrated some children's films, but her starring role now was on the royal stage. She shared her experience as a global superstar with another young woman who was facing the same scrutiny when, in 1981, she met Lady Diana Spencer after her engagement to Prince Charles.

That friendship never had a chance to flourish. Grace Kelly died on 14 September 1982, the day after the car she was driving crashed off a road in Monaco. It's believed she suffered a minor stroke just before the accident. Diana attended her funeral alongside royalty and Hollywood stars. Grace was buried in Monaco with the world watching, just as it had in her lifetime. Decades later, Grace Kelly remains the most celebrated of the modern Grimaldi and Monaco's most famous royal of all.

Grace Kelly in a publicity photo for MGM studios at the height of her film career

Albert II

b.1958 ♛ 2005-now

The headline-grabbing Prince

Prince Albert II often speaks out on environmental matters

© Getty Images

Prince Albert II of Monaco has never been far from the headlines. From the moment he was born on 14 March 1958 at the Prince's Palace, Albert Alexandre Louis Pierre was one of the most famous royal babies in the world thanks to the huge interest in his parents, fairy-tale royals Prince Rainier and Princess Grace. As an adult, his own romances have garnered plenty of column inches, but behind the scenes, he is a hard-working royal with an interest in tricky social subjects.

Albert learned the royal ropes early on. Not only did he receive an education fit for a Prince, but his father gave him lessons in royal rule. Father and son became even closer following the early death of Grace in 1982 and as Rainier's health declined with old age, Albert took on more responsibilities. He was named regent for his father on 31 March 2005 and became Sovereign Prince a week later on Rainier's death. Royalty from around Europe attended his enthronement in November that same year.

> "Albert has competed for Monaco's bobsleigh team five times"

Albert has had a high profile in environmental areas, making expeditions to Antarctica, and has also worked to protect endangered species. He's also a keen sportsman, competing five times for Monaco in the bobsleigh event at the Winter Games. But like many royals, it's his personal life that has gained most attention. In 2005, he admitted fathering a son called Alexandre with an airhostess, and in 2006, he confirmed that he was the biological father of an American teenager named Jazmin Grace.

His marriage to Charlene Wittstock in 2011 also caused controversy when it was claimed the bride had tried to run away just before the wedding. Princess Charlene denied that in later interviews and the couple welcomed twins, Jacques and Gabriella, in December 2014. During his reign, Albert has focused on developing the economy of Monaco and building new schools and hospitals. His headline-grabbing life is the latest chapter in the royal story of the Grimaldis of Monaco.

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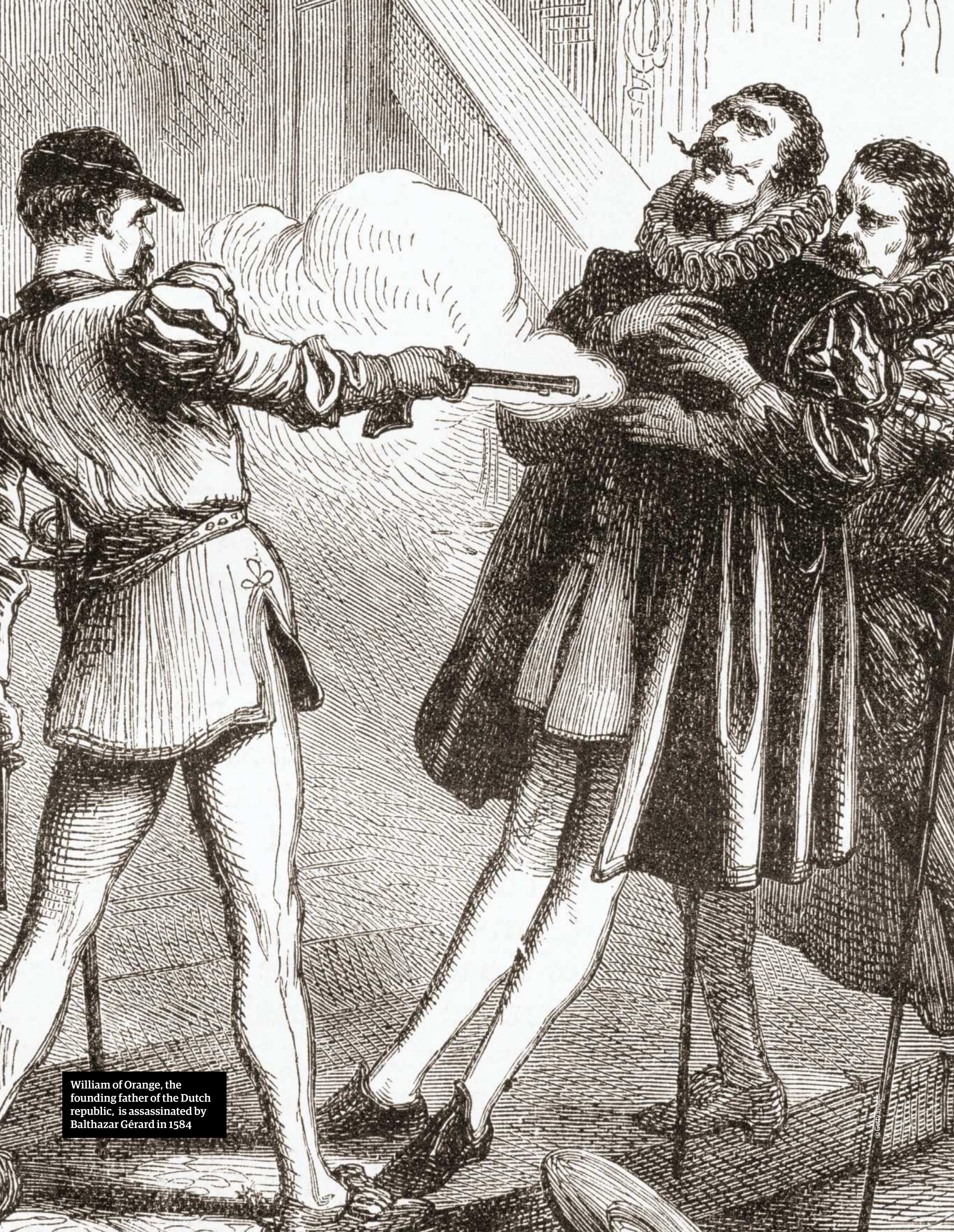
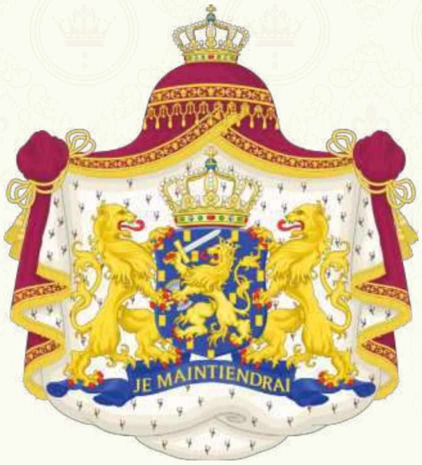


William of Orange, the founding father of the Dutch republic, is assassinated by Balthazar Gérard in 1584

© Getty Images



ORANGE-NASSAU

1815-present day

The long line of the Dutch royal family is no stranger to scandal and controversy

Words CHARLIE GINGER & SANNE DE BOER

The origins of the House of Orange-Nassau are to be found in the cobwebbed corridors of Nassau Castle in the 1100s. Located in Rhineland-Palatinate, Germany, the castle loaned its name to Henry I of Nassau, the first man to title himself Count of Nassau.

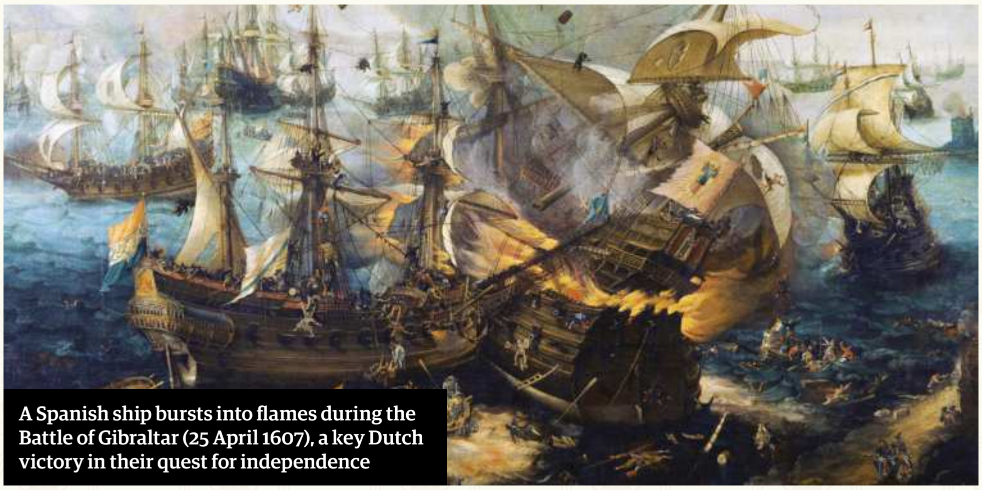
Believed to have ruled from 1160 to 1167, Henry died of the plague in Rome, but not before siring two sons who would go on to firmly establish independent branches of the Nassau family.

The Walram line – named after Henry's son Walram – included the Dukes of Nassau and Luxembourg and counted among its later descendants Adolph of Germany, who would become Count of Nassau in 1276 and then King of the Romans in 1292.

On the other side of the family ran the Ottonian line, so called in honour of Henry's other son, Otto. This separate wing of the House of Nassau could also boast of important members – no less the Princes of Orange and the monarchs of the Netherlands, a future nation in which the Ottonian line established itself as a result of the efforts of John I, Count of Nassau-Dillenburg, who by dint of his marriage to Margareta of the Marck in 1357 secured the family's position.

This marital success was matched in 1404 by his sone Engelbert I, who, having turned his back upon his religious duties as a dean, wed Johanna van Polanen and thereby obtained not only the prized Barony of Breda (a municipality in the south of the Netherlands) but also the substantial wealth that this entailed.

In 1544 this firmly entrenched dynasty would give rise to the House of Orange-Nassau, an establishment born at the behest of William the Silent, a man who would lead a fierce rebellion against the Netherlands' Spanish overlords in a campaign that would conclude with Dutch independence.


A Spanish ship bursts into flames during the Battle of Gibraltar (25 April 1607), a key Dutch victory in their quest for independence

© Alamy

Beatrix marries Claus von Amsberg in the Westerkerk, Amsterdam, on 10 March 1966

© Getty Images

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The PEDIGREE

From their beginning as Stadtholders, the House of Orange-Nassau earned its crown across the generations

Order of succession

Marriage

The Stadtholders

Before the Netherlands embraced a monarchy, a republic was in place. At the head of the state was the Stadtholder, a figure of noble birth. These, elected by the Provincial States, were not traditional rulers, but civil administrators.

– 1559-1584 –
William of Orange
b.1533-d.1584
Turn to page 132

Philip William
b.1554-d.1618

– 1585-1625 –
Maurice
b.1567-d.1625

– 1625-1647 –
Frederick Henry
b.1584-d.1647

– 1647-1650 –
William II
b.1626-d.1650

– 1672-1702 –
William III
b.1650-d.1702
Turn to page 133

Stadtholderate ended in 1795 with William V

1
– 1815-1840 –
William I
b.1772-d.1843
Turn to page 133

2
– 1840-1849 –
William II
b.1792-d.1849
He fought at Waterloo before his father came to power, and was minister of defence before becoming king. His legacy can be seen in buildings across the land.

Anna Pavlovna
b.1795-d.1865

Frederick
b.1797-d.1881

Pauline
b.1800-d.1806

Marianne
b.1810-d.1883

Alexander
b.1818-d.1848

Henry
b.1820-d.1879

Ernest Casimir
b.1822-d.1822

Sophie
b.1824-d.1897

Sophie van Württemberg
b.1818-d.1877

3
– 1849-1890 –
William III
b.1817-d.1890
The last male monarch until the current King Willem-Alexander, William II is among the most controversial figures in the Dutch royal lineage, due to his infidelities.

Emma of Waldeck and Pyrmont
b.1858-d.1934
Queen Emma was the second wife to William III, and was significantly younger than him - a good 40 years. Emma became regent when her daughter Wilhelmina inherited the throne aged just ten.

4
– 1890-1948 –
Wilhelmina
b.1880-d.1962
Turn to page 134

Henry of Mecklenburg-Schwerin
b.1876-d.1934

Orange-Nassau

William
b.1840-d.1879

Maurice
b.1843-d.1850

Alexander
b.1851-d.1884

Bernhard of Lippe-Biesterfeld
b.1911-d.2004
Turn to page 134

©Getty

5
– 1948-1980 –
Juliana
b.1909-d.2004
Turn to page 135

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Irene
b.1939

Margriet
b.1943

Christina (previously Marijke)
b.1947-d.2019

6
– 1980-2013 –
Beatrix
b.1938
Turn to page 136

Claus von Amsberg
b.1926-d.2002

Friso
b.1968-d.2013
Friso gave up his right to the throne after a controversial marriage to Mabel Wisse Smit, who had previously been linked to drug baron Klaas Bruinsma. He was injured in an avalanche in 2012 and died of complications a year later.

Constantijn
b.1969

7
– 2013-now –
Willem-Alexander
b.1967
Turn to page 137

Máxima Zorreguieta Cerruti
b.1971
Turn to page 136

Catharina-Amalia
b.2003
Catharina-Amalia is the first-born daughter of Willem-Alexander and is the heir to the throne. The Princess of Orange attends a public secondary school in The Hague.

Alexia
b.2005

Ariane
b.2007

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William of Orange

b.1533-d.1584 ♛ Stadtholder: 1559-1584

Rebel with a cause

The Dutch national hero was born in Germany as the oldest son of the Count of Nassau, and raised as a Lutheran Protestant. However, at 12 he had to convert to Catholicism to receive an inheritance from his uncle René of Chalons – including land in the Netherlands and the principality of Orange – thus becoming William of Orange-Nassau and a prince by blood. At the time William inherited these lands, the Netherlands was a collection of provinces governed by Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, but still retained a degree of individual rule with Stadtholders – political leaders that represented provinces and maintained relationships between them. Emperor Charles V summoned the young William to the Netherlands to become a page at the imperial court, which led to a shining military career and the position of Stadtholder of three provinces in 1559: Holland, Zeeland and Utrecht.

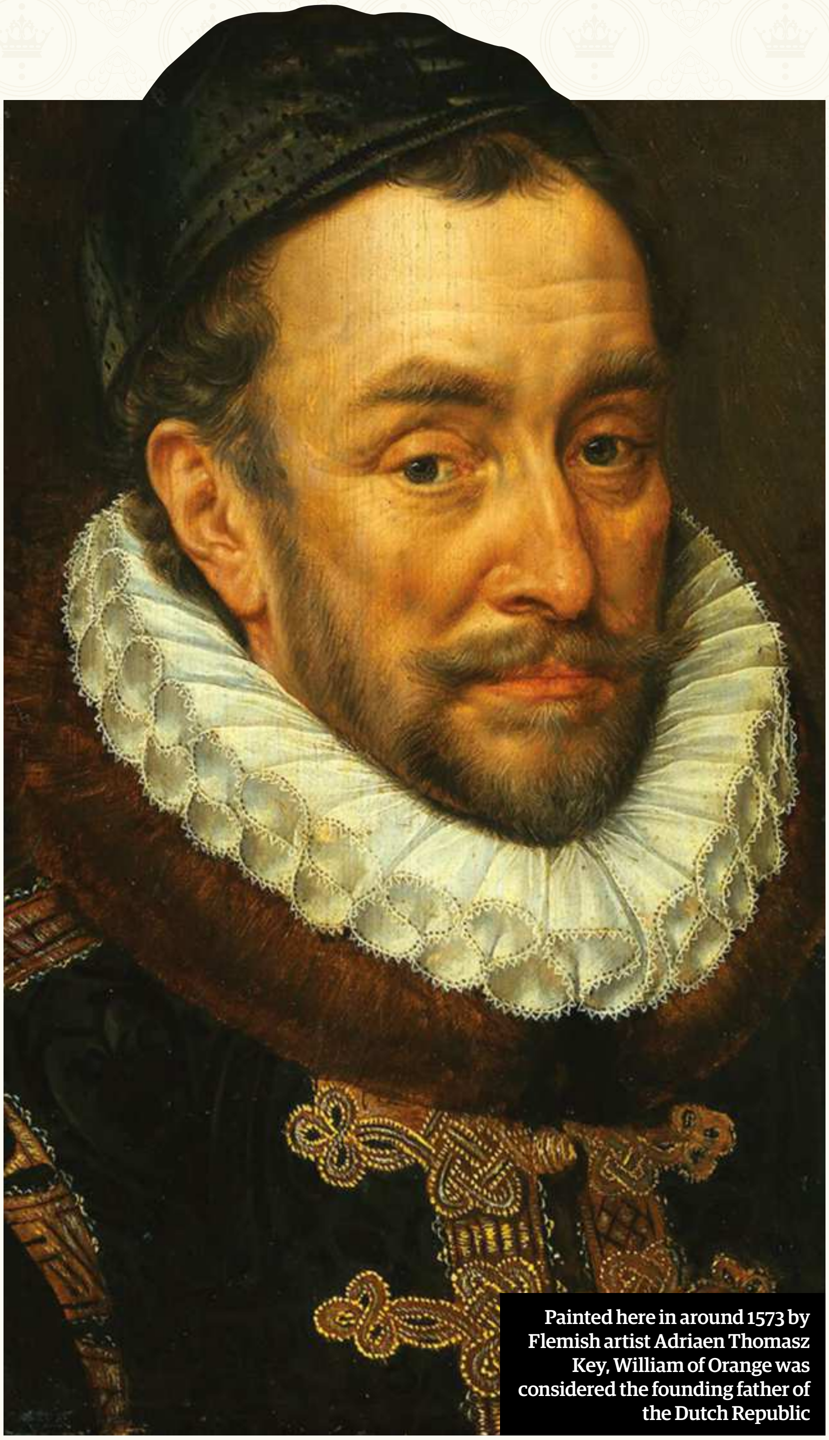
However, everything changed when Charles V died, and the rule over the Dutch principalities was passed to the Spanish branch of the Habsburg dynasty. King Philip II of Spain, a devout Catholic, succeeded Charles V in 1556, and was determined to drive out the Protestant faith. Protestants were forced to practice their religion in secret, and frustrations among them rose.

It is during this dark period that William turned from a respected political figure into a rebel. Soon after his second marriage to Anna of Saxony, a noble lady with a Lutheran Protestant background, William became vocal of his support of religious freedom. He delivered a speech to the Council of State in 1564 criticising rulers that forced religion upon their people.

In August 1566, the Beeldenstorm (Storm of Statues) began, where Protestants attacked Catholic churches and destroyed depictions of Christ and other holy icons. William was quick to support the political motivation that fuelled the Beeldenstorm, but tried to subdue the social unrest. This resulted in mistrust from both sides, so he fled to Dillenburg. During his exile, his lands were seized and his oldest son taken to Spain, which marked the start of William's true rebellion: leading an armed opposition to the Habsburg rule in 1568.

It took many years and failed sieges for his campaign to take effect. Finally, victory came when in April 1572, 600 pirates with letters of marque by William of Orange, the "Sea Beggars", seized the port of Brill. This kick-started support for the Orange camp, and by July, the "Orange towns" in the state of Holland accepted William of Orange as their Stadtholder once more.

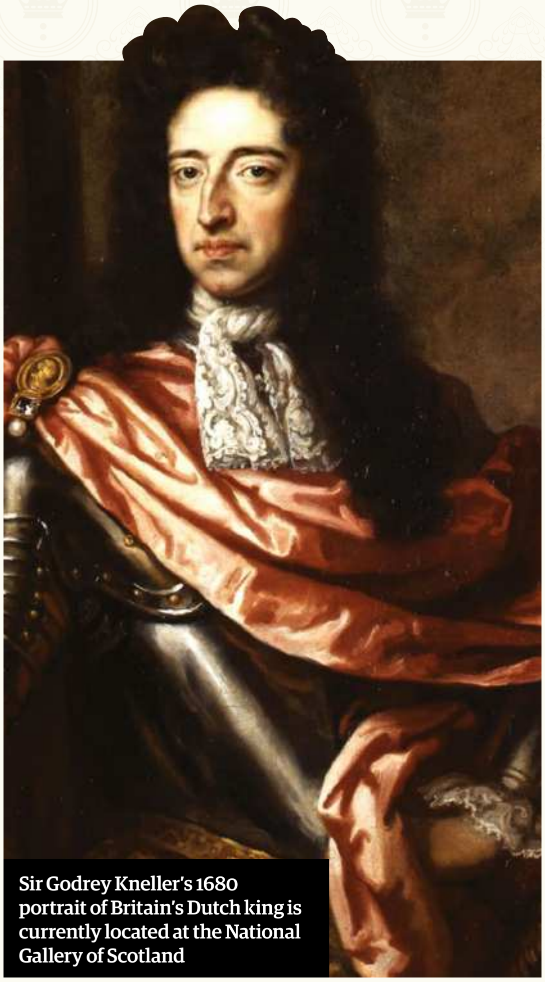
When Spain's funds ran out due to their efforts to take the Ottoman Empire, many Spanish troops mutinied. The rebellious provinces of Holland and Zeeland presented themselves as the solution, and signed a treaty with the states-general: the Pacification of Ghent. It seemed like this would mark the reunification of the provinces, but their religious and political differences tore them into two unions by 1578: the Union of Arras, aiming to reconcile with King Philip II, and the Union of Utrecht, which unified the rebellious provinces.



Painted here in around 1573 by Flemish artist Adriaen Thomasz Key, William of Orange was considered the founding father of the Dutch Republic

> "William turned from a respected political figure into a rebel"

By this time, William of Orange was marked as a traitor by Philip II, and a price was put on his head. On 10 July 1584, he was assassinated by the French Catholic Balthazar Gérard – becoming the first political figure to be assassinated by a firearm. William's popularity proved greater after his death, as his murder was met with uproar and his killer was seized. The punishment for murdering the hero of the Netherlands? The hand that pulled the trigger was cut off with a hot iron, after which he was gruesomely quartered.



Sir Godrey Kneller's 1680 portrait of Britain's Dutch king is currently located at the National Gallery of Scotland

William III of Orange

b.1650-d.1702 Stadtholder: 1672-1702 King of England: 1689-1702

A Dutch king of Britain

Already connected to the British royal family before rising to the British throne, as the grandson of King Charles I of England, William ruled over England, Ireland and Scotland between 1689 and 1702.

King William also fought for the rights of Protestants in Europe, opposing the French King Louis XIV by fighting in several wars. When James II, a Catholic, came to power in England, Scotland and Ireland in 1685, friction between Protestants and Catholics returned. James II was hugely unpopular, and William's Protestant background and marriage to James's daughter, Mary, meant many saw him as better suited for the throne. Political and religious leaders invited him to invade England in what became known as the Glorious Revolution. He was successful, and after James II was deposed, William and Mary became joint sovereigns, both actively participating in ruling the country and becoming popular monarchs. William suffered a lot of grief when Mary died in 1694, but he continued to rule until his death in 1702. His style of rule marked the transition to a more Parliament-centred rule of the House of Hanover.

Despite his seemingly successful marriage to Mary, the couple did not produce any children, which fuelled rumours that William was homosexual. This was despite the first pregnancy of Mary, which tragically ended in miscarriage, and his affair with Elizabeth Villiers. Mistresses were very common among royalty at the time, partly because marriages were considered political arrangements. This was also the case with William and Mary, though William kept fewer mistresses than other monarchs of the era. Despite this, accusations of homosexuality continued, though it could have likely been slanderous propaganda by Jacobites, who opposed his rule and believed kings could only be assigned by God.

William I

b.1772-d.1843 1815-1840

Birth of a kingdom

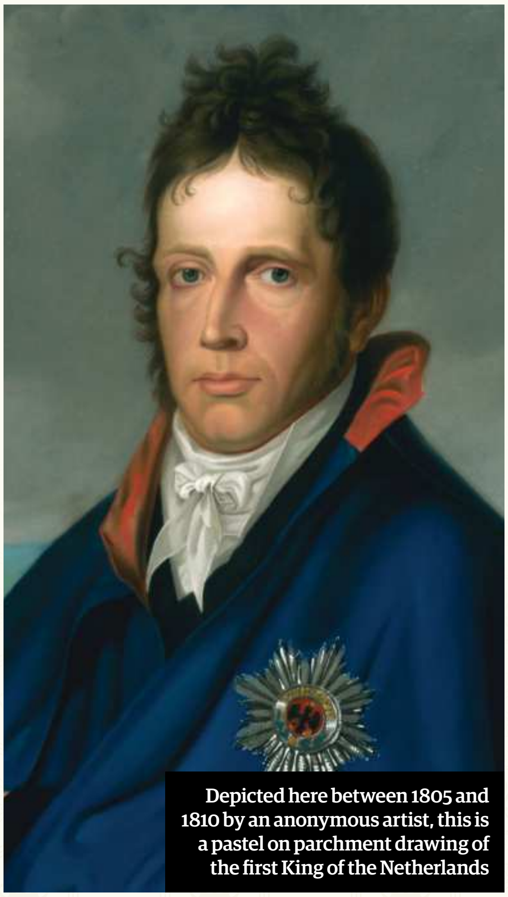
Charlotte, Princess of Wales, was the only child of George IV and Caroline of Brunswick, the husband and wife who hated one another. From the earliest days of her childhood she had been used as a weapon, with George refusing permission for the little girl to see her mother until, desperate, she ran away from the opulent surroundings of Montague House.

When Charlotte was returned to her father's custody, the pair realised that this could hardly go on. The hard-headed prince and his sensitive, smart daughter tried to find a way to live together, even as she grew from a girl into a woman. When the time came for Charlotte to marry, she knew exactly whom she wanted and that was Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld.

George, however, had other ideas, sure that he could make a much more impressive match. Yet the obstinate Charlotte persevered and she got her wish, married to Leopold not out of duty, but for love. The couple were wild about each other and soon Charlotte was pregnant, her child destined to be the heir to the throne of Great Britain.

Tragically, neither Charlotte nor her baby survived the agonising labour and she died in November 1817, as she gave birth to a stillborn son. With their favourite princess dead, the public sank into deep mourning and her father was utterly consumed by grief, seized by a deep depression that persevered long after Charlotte's death.

The death of Charlotte, Princess of Wales, and her child changed the history of Great Britain forever. With the heiress to the throne and her newborn dead, there was no other child of George IV and Caroline of Brunswick waiting in the wings. Instead, at George's death the crown passed to his brother, William IV and from him, to a certain lady you may have heard of. Her name, of course, was Victoria.



Depicted here between 1805 and 1810 by an anonymous artist, this is a pastel on parchment drawing of the first King of the Netherlands

Queen Wilhelmina was known as a stern leader in international politics, and did not have patience for insults from other rulers

Wilhelmina

b.1880-d.1962 ♛ 1890-1948

The lonely queen

Wilhelmina is the longest reigning monarch of the Netherlands, with almost 58 years on the throne. The fact she got onto the throne at all was an unlikely feat in itself; as the daughter of King William III and his second wife, Emma of Waldeck and Pyrmont, her three half-brothers and uncle Prince Frederick all had a higher claim to the throne. Two half-brothers passed away before she was born, and when she was one, her uncle died. When she was four, her half-brother Alexander died. At the tender age of ten, her father died and she became queen on the Netherlands, with her mother as regent.

Rising to the throne before puberty wasn't the only thing that marked Wilhelmina's childhood. Her father had dozens of illegitimate children with countless mistresses, and her early years in the palace were filled with gossip and scandal. She later recounted her experience as a young royal in her autobiography Eenzaam, Maar Niet Alleen (Lonely, But Not Alone). Even when Wilhelmina reached adulthood and married Duke Hendrik of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, her royal life did not become easier. Nine months into the marriage, she suffered the first of many traumatic miscarriages and stillborns. For eight years the couple remained childless, causing speculation about the fate of the throne. Finally, there came Princess Juliana in 1909, and the nation heaved a sigh of relief.

Despite her hardship, Wilhelmina was a highly successful monarch who was popular for her political prowess. She led her people through two world wars and a financial crisis in 1933, all while showing her business skills by becoming the first female billionaire (in US dollars). She had a strong dislike of the United Kingdom due to the Boer War, as the Boers were descendents of Dutch colonists, but made amends with her neighbours when she fled to England during World War II. Here, she made broadcasts to the Dutch resistance through the BBC.

Bernhard of Lippe-Biesterfeld

b.1911-d.2004

The crook of Orange

Prince Bernhard married into royalty through his long-suffering wife, Queen Juliana. Continuing a long tradition of adding German blood to the Dutch royal family, Bernhard was of Austro-German descent. When Juliana first met Bernhard, she was struck by his "man about town" ways: he dressed her in Parisian fashion and took the long isolated princess on incredible trips across the world. But then disaster struck in the form of World War II. Juliana, the crown princess at the time, Bernhard and their two daughters first fled to England and then to Canada.

During this time, Bernhard went to England to campaign against Hitler and the Third Reich. He went on the BBC to speak about the war, calling Hitler a German tyrant and expressing his faith in Great Britain to overthrow the Third Reich. He attempted to make himself popular among the Dutch public with his military achievements, making sure there was footage of him in uniform, marching and working together with other soldiers. Queen Wilhelmina made him a general, and later a commander. Many thought of him as a war hero of the resistance as the time, but after his death, it's been suggested that his participation in the war was exaggerated and used for publicity means.

Controversy surrounded Bernhard, most notably in his social contacts and murky financial arrangements. One of the most infamous scandals involving him was the Lockheed-Affaire, or the Lockheed bribery scandals. These scandals involved the US aerospace company Lockheed and took place between the 1950s and 1970s. The company bribed members of governments to ensure military contracts, such as the sale of the F-104 Starfighter. Prince Bernhard received $1.1 million to make sure the F-104 would beat the Mirage 5 for a purchase contract. When the scandal came to light, Prime Minister Joop den Uyl ordered an inquiry into the affair, which almost led the end of the monarchy as Queen Juliana threatened to abdicate (and Princess Beatrix said she had no interest in taking over) if Bernhard was prosecuted in court. A prosecution did not follow, but Bernhard lost many privileges, such as high public positions and the right to wear his military uniforms – something that meant a lot to him.

Prince Bernhard's social life raised eyebrows too, as he rubbed shoulders with dictators and wanted criminals alike, and many women were among his social contacts. As well as his four daughters with Juliana (Beatrix, Irene, Margriet and Marijke) Bernhard had two extramarital daughters: Alicia de Bielefield with a German pilot and

“He rubbed shoulders with dictators and wanted criminals alike”

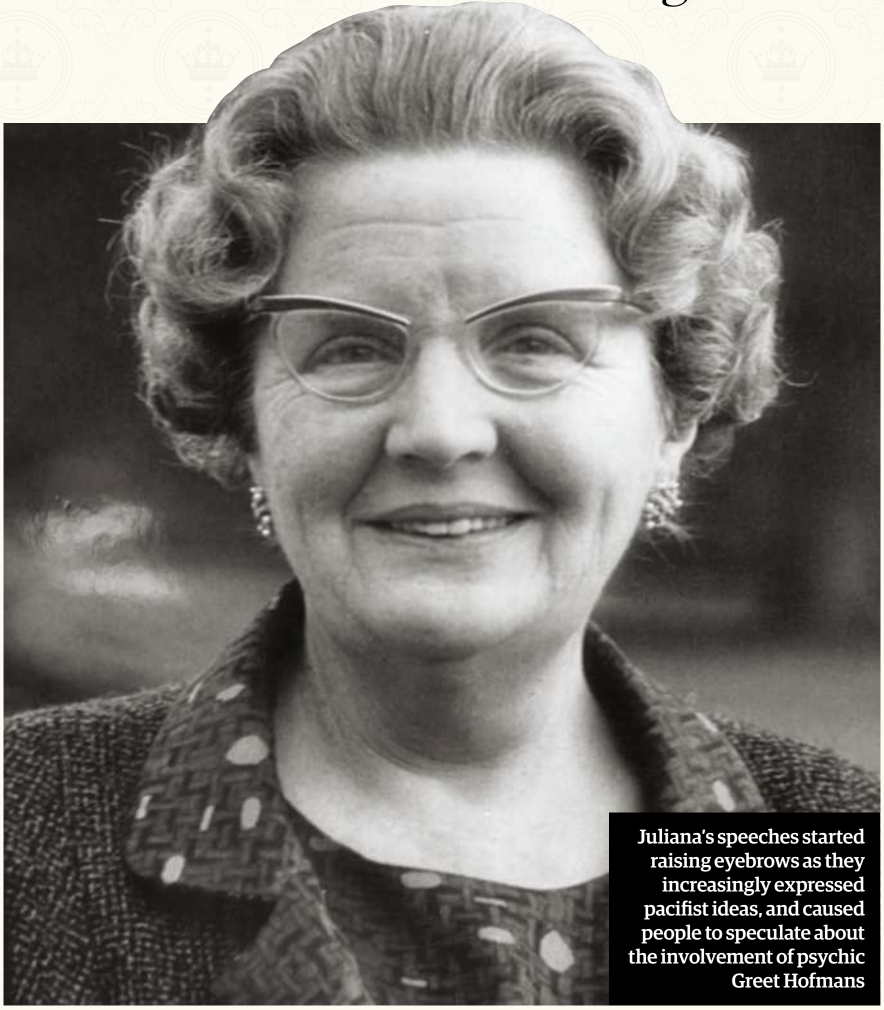
Alexa Grinda with his French mistress Hélène Grinda. In 2011, a third daughter came forward, but DNA evidence was never provided.

When his youngest daughter Princess Marijke was diagnosed with an eye problem, he invited Greet Hofmans, a psychic healer from Amsterdam, to live in their Palace Soestdijk. Juliana built up a strong friendship with the alternative healer, partly because of her problems with her husband. Many saw Hofmans as a Rasputin figure, whispering pacifist ideas into Juliana’s ear, which was reiterated in an article in the German newspaper Der Spiegel named “Zwischen Koniging und Rasputin” (Between Queen and Rasputin). In an interview released after his death, Bernhard admitted that he leaked the negative rumours about his wife in an attempt to have her hospitalised for her disillusions.

Despite this, Prince Bernhard and Juliana never divorced, though they lived separate lives in their large palace. When Bernhard died in 2004, posthumous interviews revealed the details of scandals such as the Lockheed-Affaire and his many infidelities, and more details are still emerging today.

© Getty Images

Prince Bernhard was passionately involved with WWF - but even that interest was later tarnished by accusations of using it for money laundering


© Getty Images

Juliana’s speeches started raising eyebrows as they increasingly expressed pacifist ideas, and caused people to speculate about the involvement of psychic Greet Hofmans

Juliana

b.1909-d.2004 ♛ 1948-1980

Touched by holy spirits

Juliana is the most recently deceased monarch of the Netherlands, and is remembered quite fondly, as she was approachable and expressed a wish to be normal. As a leader, she was often thought of as naïve and unstable, partially due to the scandal with Greet Hofmans in 1956 and the accusations that the psychic wrote her speeches and directed her movements. It was thought that over their nine-year friendship, Hofmans inspired her pacifist ideas - seen as inappropriate during the Cold War. Bernhard’s attempts to drive her and Hofmans apart, and even get her institutionalised, was utter betrayal for the sensitive queen. When she stepped down in 1980, she stated that now she could finally “grow old normally”, showing an intention to shy away from the public eye and the scandals that marked her time as queen.

It was surprising then, that in a public interview with her husband in 1987, she showed a different, more brash side of herself. When asked about her best memories, she turned to her husband and asked what “we” should say, and they chose their wedding day and their 25th anniversary, with a smile. Juliana was relaxed, laughed and spoke loudly of how she hated old-fashioned traditions and “pro-to-col”. She recalled how someone once revealed to her it was forbidden to say “no” to the queen, and how much it frustrated her that people were forced to agree with her, calling it “so mean, so so mean!” She also went on to express a distaste for the media and the accusations that the pair often suffered, calling these sorts of publications “criminal”.

Towards the end of her life she suffered from dementia, and the public saw increasingly less of her. She experienced the birth of Crown Princess Amalia in 2003, but by this time her memory had deteriorated so much that she could not recognise her family members. She died in 2004.

It was easy to make abstract stamps and coins of Beatrix's profile - her trademark hairdo remained constant and rigid throughout her rule

Beatrix

b.1938 ♛ 1980-2013

The lady and the German

The young Beatrix was born to Princess Juliana and Prince Bernhard in 1938, and lived her early years in Canada. From a young age she showed herself to be ambitious, with a natural affinity for leadership. She was the first princess to go to a normal primary school, reflecting her mother's more relaxed attitude towards what a royal should be.

She was a schoolbook example of a princess, with relatively few bumps in the road. However, when a picture of her with a mysterious man surfaced, the tabloids were itching to announce an engagement. Before long, the truth about the man's identity came out: he was a German. Beatrix was in a relationship with Claus von Amsberg, a much older German nobleman who had served in the Hitler Youth (mandatory for all German boys his age). The war was still a fresh wound for the Dutch, and their relationship was highly controversial. Despite Queen Juliana telling the public, "I can assure you, it is good" at the announcement of their engagement in 1965, their wedding day was still disturbed by protesters.

Despite the rocky start, the public soon grew to love the prince, especially after the birth of three new princes in quick succession, Willem-Alexander (1967), Johan Friso (1968) and Constantijn (1969). The couple enjoyed a blissful family life in Drakensteyn until Beatrix ascended to the throne aged 42, in 1980. She was a respected, traditional monarch, but the throne also brought hardship. Claus suffered from severe depression in the 1980s and was taken into rehab twice. He died in 2002, three months after meeting their first grandchild, Eloise.

Beatrix abdicated the throne in 2013 with a public announcement. The reasons she gave for stepping down were her age, as her 75th birthday was coming up, coinciding with the 200th anniversary of the Netherlands becoming a kingdom.

Máxima Zorreguieta Cerruti

b.1971

The Argentinian princess

Before Máxima was a famous royal, she was an investment banker, and she met Willem-Alexander at a party in Seville in 1999. The two quickly became involved, but her father's former position as Argentina's minister of agriculture during its military dictatorship under General Jorge Rafael Videla halted the relationship. After a formal investigation, Máxima accepted the request that her father should have as little involvement with the royal pair as possible, and not attend their wedding. She expressed sadness over her father's absence, but was understanding of the sentiment of the Dutch people.

Máxima won the hearts of the Dutch public through her struggle to learn the Dutch language, which is notoriously hard to master. During the public announcement of their engagement, she joked about a public gaffe Willem-Alexander made by remarking, "Hij is een beetje dom," which translates as, "He's a little bit dumb," causing the room of reporters to erupt in laughter.

The two married in 2001, and the wedding was a huge public affair. With the marriage Máxima received Dutch citizenship and membership of the royal house, but retained her Argentinian nationality too. She also had to consent to raising potential children as Protestants, but was allowed to retain her own Roman Catholic faith. During the wedding, Máxima wore a tiara that combined elements of the tiara of Queen Beatrix and Queen Emma. The televised event drew millions of viewers, and the camera famously caught the future queen's tears as Argentinian tango music was played. She has consistently stressed that she would not forget her Latin heritage, referring to her love of music and dancing.

The couple have three daughters: Catharina-Amalia Beatrix Carmen Victoria, Alexia Juliana Marcela Laurentien and Ariane Wilhelmina Máxima.

Despite her father's past, Máxima is adored for her style and grace, while her humour and occasional etiquette slip up makes her an approachable figure

Willem-Alexander

b.1967 2013-now

The everyman King

Willem-Alexander is the current king of the Netherlands, the first king in 123 years having succeeded his mother in 2013. At the time of his coronation, Willem-Alexander refused to take on the traditional name Willem IV, citing the reason that he had been known by his own name for 46 years and becoming king would not change him. He also added that he was not a number, and wanted to introduce a new, modern role as king.

Breaking traditions is a recurring theme throughout Willem-Alexander's life. The first son to Queen Beatrix and Claus, he grew up in castle Drakenstein and was sent to a normal primary school. For many years he was not aware that he was any different to the other children – until a fellow pupil spilled the secret. He quickly became a brash and unruly boy, and once famously told the press, "Nu alle Nederlandse pers, opgerot!", which translates into a rather rude demand for them to get lost. It was cause for the press to keep an eye on this boisterous youth and see what else he'd get up to.

Partly to escape the press, partly to find some independence, he later attended the Atlantic College in Wales, where he was free to act out without the cameras. The Dutch public quickly turned against the prince, seeing him as a spoiled, unintelligent boy who didn't take anything seriously. To prove them wrong, Willem-Alexander joined the marines, and to further prove his sense of dedication, took part in the Elfstedentocht of 1986, an extreme test of stamina in the form of an ice-skating race through 11 cities, stretching almost 200 kilometres on natural ice. It's a highly traditional race that can only be held in the harshest of winter. At the finish line, Willem-Alexander was quoted saying he did the tour as a bet – the prize was a crate of beer.

It seemed that the prince's life was filled with fun and privilege, but in reality he found it difficult to grow up as a royal, and his father Prince Claus suffered from depression, being admitted to rehab twice, which the young man took very hard. When he applied to university for a degree in history, he joined a student fraternity and was more often found going out and socialising with girls than being in class, which earned him the nickname Prins Pils, or Prince Beer.

In 1995, during his student times, he crashed a car with Emilie Bremers, who was rumoured to be his girlfriend. Little did the press know, there was a different dashing Argentinean blonde that would assume that label: Máxima Zorreguieta Cerruti. A steady relationship was exactly what the prince's reputation needed, but there was one problem: Máxima's father, Jorge Horacio Zorreguiea Stefanini served as the minister of agriculture during the regime of General Jorge Rafael Videla, a regime that committed many crimes against human rights. Nevertheless, in March 2001, the engagement with Máxima was made public, after a formal investigation into Máxima's father and after it was ensured he would not be involved in the wedding arrangements and formalities. The press conference started with a reassuring wink from Máxima to her fiancé, caught on camera. During this press conference, Máxima attempted to present herself as integrated, and educated on Dutch language and culture by expressing herself in (at the time limited) Dutch, and it didn't take long for the public to embrace her.

As a king, Willem-Alexander has made it clear that he wants to do away with many of the traditions associated with the Dutch royal family, and reduce them to a more ceremonial role in governing the country.

Willem-Alexander may have been known as Prins Pils during his student days, but nowadays he's a respected and well-liked king

> "The Dutch public quickly turned against the prince"

© Getty Images

Haile Selassie, the last Emperor of Abyssinia, was removed from power twice – by Italy in 1936, then a communist coup in 1971

© Getty Images

AROUND THE WORLD IN SIX DYNASTIES

From Abdullah I to Zhu Yuanzhang, join our tour of the world's most interesting royal dynasties

Three days before his coronation on 1 August 2008, King George Tupou V of Tonga announced that he was transferring the vast majority of his political powers to the country's prime minister. By relinquishing his position as an absolute monarch and shifting his country towards democracy, King George was writing one of the latest chapters in the history of world monarchy.

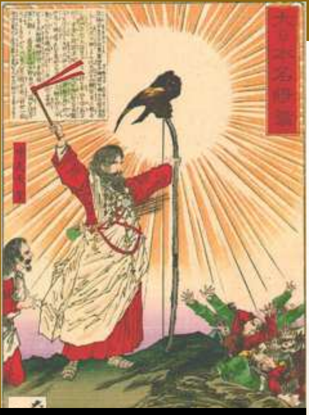
Henry VIII and Louis XIV may be the kings who first come to mind when we think of royalty, but George Tupou V proves that monarchy is far more than just a European phenomenon.

Royal rulers have sat on thrones around the world for thousands of years. Less than 20 non-European monarchies survive in the present day, but almost every corner of the globe was governed by a monarch at some point in its history, from the royal dynasties of Korea and Vietnam to the Aztec and Inca emperors who confronted the conquistadors.

Some royal dynasties came and went: Egypt had 32 during the age of the pharaohs, while China had more than 20 between its ancient origins and the rise of the communist state in the 20th century. Others have lasted for far longer: the Abyssinian Empire was ruled by the same dynasty for 704 years, while the Japanese imperial family has racked up more than 2,000 years and counting.

Want to find out more about some of these fascinating families? Pick up your round-the-world ticket and join us on a voyage of discovery to some of the most famous royal dynasties from the wider world.

— Yamato Dynasty, Japan *660 BCE-present* —



The Yamato dynasty dates back to 660 BCE and its mythological founder Jimmu

The longest royal dynasty in history has ruled from the Iron Age to the present day

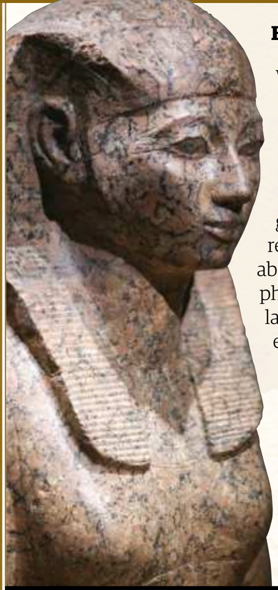
Such is the length of time that the Yamato dynasty has sat on the Chrysanthemum Throne that the origins of the Japanese royal family are shrouded in mystery, but according to legend the founder of the dynasty was Jimmu, a descendant of the gods who became emperor in 660 BCE. Although the Yamato have been ever-present figureheads in Japan ever since, the actual power they have wielded has usually been limited.

At different times, various military clans have controlled the country's government, from the Soga, who helped introduce Buddhism to Japan in the 7th century, to the shoguns, who were de facto rulers of Japan between 1185 and 1868.

When Emperor Kanmu established a new capital at Heian-kyo (modern Kyoto) in 794, it marked the beginning of the Heian period - four centuries of peaceful rule, which is considered a golden age of classical art, poetry and writing. Over a thousand years later, the Meiji Restoration dissolved the shogunate and granted the emperor greater personal power, including personal command of the armed forces and the right to decree laws. Under the Meiji system, Japan rapidly industrialised and became a world power, reaching its zenith under Hirohito, who promoted an imperial cult of devotion during World War II.

The power of the Yamato dynasty was restored to Emperor Meiji in 1868 after 700 years of shogun control

— Thutmosid Dynasty, Egypt *1550-1292 BCE* —



Hatshepsut instigated a number of monumental building projects during a largely peaceful 20-year reign

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Egypt's most famous pharaohs ruled during a time of military conquest and religious reformation

When Howard Carter peered into the gloom of a previously unexplored tomb in the Valley of the Kings, he excitedly said that he could see "wonderful things". The gold treasures he discovered revealed new information about a previously little-known pharaoh who ruled during the later years of Egypt's most eventful dynasty.

Ancient Egypt was ruled by more than 30 royal dynasties, but the most familiar one to modern eyes is the 18th Dynasty, often called Thutmosid for its four different pharaohs named Thutmose - one of whom, Thutmose I, saw Egypt reach its greatest territorial extent in more than 3,000 years of pharaonic rule.

Under the 18th Dynasty's founder, Ahmose I, Hyksos invaders were expelled from the Nile Delta and the period of the New Kingdom began. Within 50 years the dynasty had expanded from its powerbase around Thebes, reuniting Upper and Lower Egypt and extending to the Euphrates River in the north and Dar al-Manasir in modern Sudan in the south. This vast empire passed into the hands of Hatshepsut, the second and longest-reigning female pharaoh, who ruled successfully for two decades - perhaps the first great woman of history.

The 18th Dynasty may have seen Egypt reach its zenith, but it also saw the kingdom turned upside down. Nearly 100 years after the end of Hatshepsut's reign, the crown was placed on the head of Amenhotep IV. Five years into his reign he abandoned the old polytheistic religion and began to worship the sun disc Aten instead. The upheaval saw the court leave Thebes in favour of Armana, a new city dedicated to the Aten, while the pharaoh changed his own name to Akhenaten. Yet the pharaoh's radical changes did not last for long after his death; within months the old religion began to re-establish itself and Armana was abandoned. Two short-lived reigns followed, that of Akhenaten's son, Smenkhkare, and the enigmatic female pharaoh Neferneferuaten - possibly Akhenaten's famous queen, Nefertiti. Then another son took the crown as Tutankhaten, but in the second year of his reign he also changed his name to the one which would become famous around the world after Howard Carter famously discovered his tomb: Tutankhamun.

Akhenaten's religious reforms turned Egyptian society on its head by promoting the worship of the sun disc Aten only

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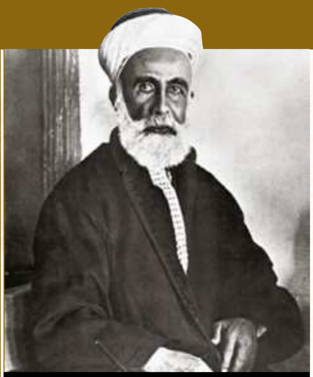
— Hashim Dynasty, Jordan *1916-present* —

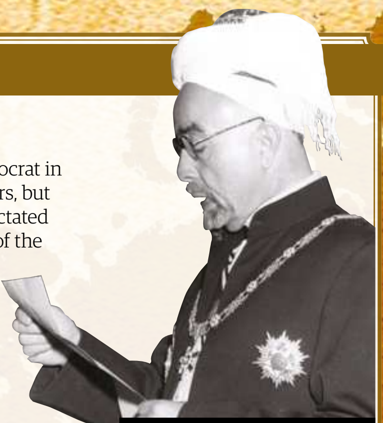
From the ashes of World War I arose a new dynasty with prophetic roots



Hussein ibn Ali was a freedom fighter who hoped to create a pan-Arab nation but saw his sons placed on the separate thrones of Iraq and Jordan

The Hashemites came to power at the end of World War I as the Middle East seized control of its own destiny following centuries of Ottoman rule. After feisty Arab leader Hussein ibn Ali declared himself King of the Arab Lands in 1916, Britain and France recognised him only as King of Hejaz but allowed his sons Faisal and Abdullah to be crowned as Kings of Iraq and Transjordan in 1921. The Hashemite family based their legitimacy on a claim to be direct descendants of the Prophet Muhammad, although they actually won their thrones with the support of Britain and France in return for rising up against the Ottomans during the war.

Faisal's grandson was overthrown in the revolution that led to the creation of the Republic of Iraq in 1958, but Abdullah's great-grandson continues to hold the throne in Jordan. Initially, Abdullah was given the right to rule Transjordan as an autocrat in terms of internal affairs, but with foreign affairs dictated from London as part of the British mandate. Upon achieving independence in 1946, Abdullah and his successors have transformed Jordan into a stable constitutional monarchy with relatively liberal social and economic policies compared to other Arab nations.



Abdullah I ruled Transjordan from its creation in 1921 and declared the country's independence in 1946

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— Solomon Dynasty, Abyssinia *1270-1974* —

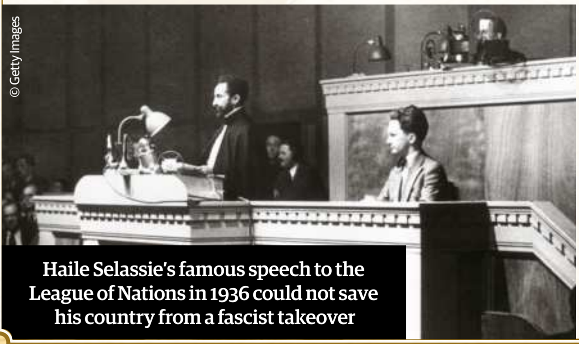
The family of a Biblical king controlled a strip of East Africa for seven centuries

The Solomonic dynasty claimed descent from the Biblical King Solomon of Israel and the Queen of Sheba, but the historical reign of the family only began in 1270 when Yekuno Amlak overthrew the last Zagwe ruler of what its now Eritrea and the Ethiopian Highlands. Over the next 700 years, the Abyssinian Empire – named after the ethnic Ethiopian people from whom the Solomonic dynasty derived – expanded to cover nearly half a million square miles of east Africa.

During the 16th century the Christian empire faced multiple invasions by the Ottomans and, in 1531, the House of Solomon was defeated by the Ottoman-backed Adal Sultanate. Emperor Gelawdewos was restored to the throne in 1543 with Portuguese support, although was himself killed in a failed attempt to conquer his Muslim neighbours.

The peak of the Abyssinian Empire was reached at the turn of the 18th century, when Iyasu the Great established diplomatic links with France and the Netherlands. However, internal dissension and civil war was never far from the surface. Iyasu was assassinated by his son, Tekle Haymanot, who was in turn killed in a court conspiracy within two years. The strife continued as the Abyssinian Empire struggled through the century-long Age of Princes with rival warlords battling for power, leaving the Solomonic emperors largely confined to their own capital city, Gondar.

The end of the Abyssinian Empire began when European powers carved out vast colonies in the continent. Eritrea was seized by Italy in 1890 and the rest of Ethiopia followed in 1936, although Emperor Haile Selassie was returned to power by the British Army in 1941. However, he was toppled again in 1971, this time by a communist military junta. With his suspicious death in captivity, the long reign of the House of Solomon in Abyssinia finally came to an end.



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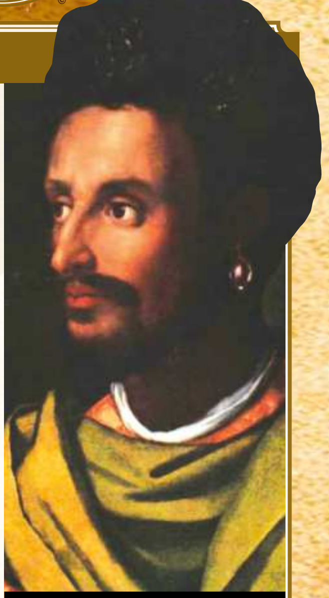
Haile Selassie's famous speech to the League of Nations in 1936 could not save his country from a fascist takeover



Emperor Dawit II lost control of the Abyssinian Empire to Muslim invaders in 1531 and died before it could be reconquered with Portuguese help

— Qajar Dynasty, Persia *1789-1925* —

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Six-year-old Ahmad Shah Qajar acceded to the throne in 1909 amidst a constitutional revolution

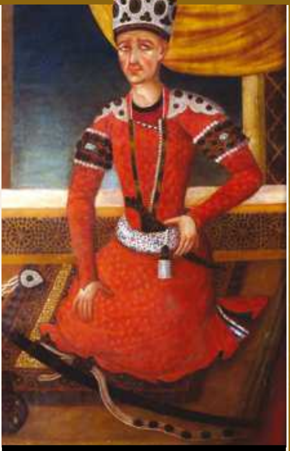
The dynasty that came into being at the point of a sword but fell victim to foreign influence

Brutal warlord Mohammad Khan was ruthless in his pursuit of power, destroying entire cities and massacring their inhabitants if they stood against him. It meant that he was declared shah of Persia after ten years of rebellion, although it would be another seven years until he was crowned at a coronation ceremony.

However, Mohammad Khan's ruthlessness also led to his untimely death - he was assassinated as he slept by desperate servants whom the shah had ordered to be executed the next day simply for quarrelling in his presence.

Although the founder of the Qajar dynasty was succeeded by six heirs who ruled for another 128 years, his family's fortunes began to decline. The Caucasus was lost after two wars with Russia, leaving the economy crumbling. Trade concessions, the right to build roads and the authority to collect import duties were sold off to European interests, leaving many to believe - probably rightly - that Persia was effectively controlled by foreign nations.

Persia lost even more independence when it was carved up into spheres of influence by the Anglo-Russian Entente of 1907. When World War I broke out, 16-year-old Ahmad Shah Qajar declared Persia's neutrality, but was powerless to prevent fighting on Iranian soil between the Ottomans, Russia and Britain. The writing was on the wall for the Qajar dynasty - by the time Ahmed Shah was deposed in 1925 following a coup d'état, he was already living in a European exile.

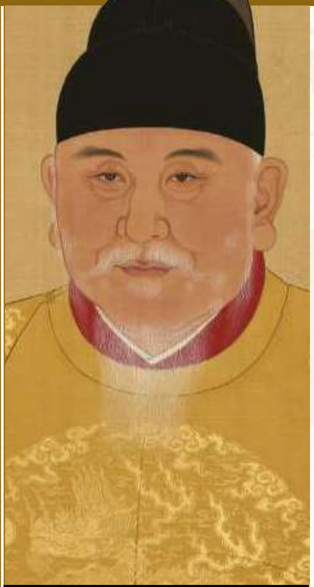


Mohammad Khan Qajar seized control of Persia through military might and expanded her borders

> "Persia lost even more independence when it was carved up"

明朝

— Ming Dynasty, China *1368-1644* —



The Hongwu Emperor was helped to power by success in the Battle of Lake Poyang, possibly the largest naval battle in history

Rising from humble origins, the Ming dynasty lasted 250 years before it fell to another peasant revolution

Zhu Yuanzhang, the man who would found one of China's most successful royal dynasties, was born into a poor farming family in the east of the Great Yuan Empire. He rose through the ranks of the military to command the army that overthrew the Mongol rulers of China and, after suppressing rival warlords, declared himself emperor of the new Ming Empire, adopting the name Hongwu. He ensured he maintained his grip on the throne through military might with a standing army of more than a million soldiers and the largest naval dockyard in the world.

Under the Ming, many of China's most famed monuments were built. The Forbidden City was constructed after the Yongle Emperor - the third of the Ming dynasty, who seized the throne after a vicious three-year civil war with his nephew - decreed Beijing to be his northern capital. The Great Wall of China, despite pre-dating the Ming by more than a millennium, was rebuilt in its modern form with larger walls and integrated watchtowers and barracks to keep out the Mongolian tribes to the north.

The Ming period also saw China's first contacts with the western world. The Yongle Emperor sent his trusted admiral Zheng He on seven long voyages of exploration into the Indian Ocean, reaching the Arabian Peninsula and the eastern coast of Africa. When European explorers made landfall on Chinese soil, the Ming emperors allowed trade to take place, boosting the Chinese economy. One of the most sought-after Chinese exports was its stunning blue-and-white painted porcelain, a fine ceramic that was perfected in the Ming era.

However, European trade was not enough to prevent an economic crisis caused by the rocketing value of silver. Combined with famine due to a number of years with unusually poor weather, the population of China was ripe for rebellion. The Ming dynasty came to an end as it came to power - at the hands of a peasant-turned-soldier, Li Zicheng. The Chongzhen Emperor, the 17th and final emperor of his family, hanged himself from a tree just outside the Forbidden City, bringing to an end more than 250 years of Ming rule in China.

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The Great Wall of China was rebuilt in its present from to protect the Ming dynasty

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WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD?

Throughout history the great dynasties have risen and fallen but it seems like some are here to stay - or are they?

Over the centuries, the rise and fall of great dynasties has been both a catalyst and a reaction to social upheaval and change, with history proving that even the apparently mightiest and most invulnerable royal houses are capable of being violently toppled, like the Romanovs, or simply fading away, like the Tudors. With hindsight, it's easy to look back and see where these historic rulers went wrong and to pinpoint the fatal errors, poor decisions and external forces that led to their demise, but unfortunately the people involved had no such advantage and were often taken by surprise when events overtook them and they found themselves dethroned and their dynasty at an end.

In order to survive in an increasingly turbulent world, the world's royal families have had to quickly learn to adapt and evolve in order to maintain relevance and escape the often horrifying fates that have befallen less fortunate dynasties. In this respect, the Windsors have, despite some significant challenges over the years, been one of the most remarkably successful royal dynasties and this has been primarily due to their willingness to heed warnings, pay attention to feedback and make whatever changes are necessary to survive - even to the extent of changing the family name in 1917 as a reaction to anti-German feeling in Britain. As the Queen's reign draws to its end, questions are once again increasingly being asked about the future of the British royal family and whether it has a place in a progressive modern society, especially a democratic, socialist one like Great Britain.

Although history demonstrates that Shakespeare was telling the truth when he wrote "uneasy lies the head that wears the crown", most of the great dynasties flourished during the early-modern period and faced relatively few challenges to their authority. The execution of Charles I in 1649 sent shock waves throughout the known world, but did not cause too much discomfort to his fellow monarchs. In contrast, the beheading of his descendant, Louis XVI, over a century later and in a very different world would cause ripples of unease all around Europe and sow the seeds for revolt and upheaval elsewhere.

> "In order to survive in an increasingly turbulent world, the world's royal families have had to learn to adapt and evolve"

World War I, which was at its heart a dynastic tussle between the closely related British, German and Russian royal families, would have an even more catastrophic effect as it marked the end of the great and previously indomitable Hohenzollern, Habsburg and Romanov dynasties. If the remaining royal houses wanted to survive in the very different new world that emerged from the ashes of the two great wars of the 20th century then they would have to work hard to stay relevant, maintain the affection and respect of the people and avoid the many new dangers that threatened them, from the ever-present spectre of communism, which had deemed royalty to be a parasitic irrelevance, to the ever-increasing scrutiny of the media in a celebrity-obsessed world. Whereas in the past, the activities and personalities of royal personages could be discreetly hidden from public gaze, now they were avidly photographed and discussed everywhere and by everyone - and not always in a very flattering or sympathetic way.

For royal houses to survive, they would have to learn how to both control and use the press to their own ends, manipulating them to project the best possible public image while at the same time, making the royals appear more relevant and approachable. To maintain both the intrinsic mystique and dignity of royalty while at the same time emphasising their ordinariness and relatability is a very difficult balancing act and has often gone sadly awry, most notably when Diana, Princess of Wales became one of the most hounded, photographed and talked-about celebrities in the world - with predictably disastrous and tragic results. In the early 1990s, the Queen responded to the difficulties that were besetting her family at the time by deciding that it was high time that the 'Family Firm' behaved in a more business-like way and setting up the Way Ahead Group, which comprised the most significant members of the royal family and their senior officials and which met once a year in order to discuss the

As the Queen's reign draws to its end, questions are once again increasingly being asked about the future of the royal family

Harry and Meghan's romance and marriage would have been unthinkable just a couple of generations ago

way forward for the monarchy, which included debates about paying tax, handling the media and making whatever changes were deemed necessary in order to stay afloat.

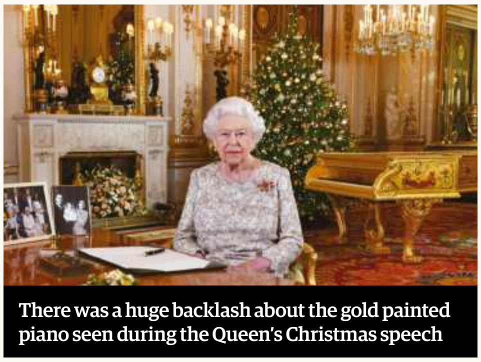
In the past, access to members of the ruling family was strictly controlled with the vast majority of their subjects never getting so much as a quick glimpse of them and only being able to recognise their faces from official photographs and currency. In the new modern age, however, this would clearly have to change. In Britain, the turning point came during World War II when King George VI and Queen Elizabeth regularly appeared in public in the capital and elsewhere in order to show camaraderie with the bombed and suffering populace, while their daughters Elizabeth and Margaret also made regular appearances and, in an unprecedented move, even broadcast a radio message to other children of the Commonwealth, expressing their sympathy to those who had been displaced by the war or separated from parents. Encouraged by the enthusiastic public response to this, the British royals continued to maintain this high level of engagement even after the war was over and it has undoubtedly played a part in their continued existence.

"The younger royals are becoming more outspoken"

However, although this accessibility has increased their popularity, there have been occasional missteps along the way, such as the televised *It's A Royal Knockout* of 1987, which was widely seen as an undignified and embarrassing step too far in the other direction as it made the royal family seem too ordinary, rather ridiculous and, most dangerously, unworthy of the unearned privilege that they retain only thanks to the continued goodwill of their subjects. As the media becomes increasingly powerful and difficult to control, the royal families of the world have had to move with the times and adapt their own behaviours in order to keep up. The huge and constantly growing influence of social media in the past decade has also increased their burden as the population has become ever more interested in celebrities and has come to expect a certain amount of access to their daily lives. In response to this, most of the royal houses have set up social media accounts which broadcast a winning mixture of official statements and photographs, and more informal pictures of the royal family out and about - all strictly monitored by the royal press offices, who keep an eye on what strikes the right note and what doesn't. Often it can be something surprisingly insignificant, like the gold-painted piano in the background of the Queen's Christmas Day broadcast, drawing criticism from the public.

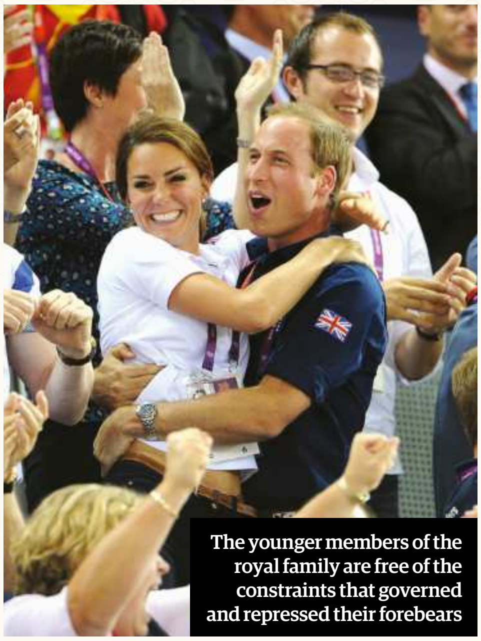
As the royal houses struggled to find their place in the post-war world, they gave a lot of thought to the best way to define their own role, with an eye to maintaining relevance and influence. In Britain, although the sovereign is head of state, they are effectively powerless and have no political or executive role other than to support the government. The Queen's official role is to act as a focus for national identity, give a sense of stability, support the interests of the country and recognise and reward success - all of which she does with aplomb. Although she takes a great interest in causes, particularly of a social nature, she prefers not to express strong opinions, which makes her appear extraordinarily discreet in an age when every other celebrity is airing their every thought online. The younger royals, not just in Britain but elsewhere in the world, are becoming progressively more outspoken, however, and feel emboldened not just to quietly turn up, cut ribbons and make a polite speech but to campaign, make videos, engage people, express opinions and talk candidly about social issues that effect them on a personal

To many, the display of royal wealth is woefully out of step with our modern times



There was a huge backlash about the gold painted piano seen during the Queen's Christmas speech

Diana's global fame completely transformed the royal family



The younger members of the royal family are free of the constraints that governed and repressed their forebears

level. For example, Prince Harry's recently revealed his struggles to deal with his grief and depression after the death of his mother. This candour may seem commonplace in today's social media-obsessed environment but it's a big step forward for the royals as they become increasingly engaged and visible in their efforts to carve out a new role for themselves in a fast changing and often very critical world.

However, if they are going to survive into the next century and beyond, it is absolutely necessary that they do everything they can to adapt to the new environment, even if that means doing things that would have been considered unthinkable just a few decades ago. All over the world, royal families are finding themselves confronted by the exact same challenges and many are going even further than the Windsors when it comes to making themselves more approachable by eschewing their lavish palaces and opulent lifestyles in favour of a far more egalitarian existence.

This social progress is aided by the fact that several dynasties have done away with primogeniture, which favoured male heirs over female regardless of the order that they were born in, while at the same time today's young royals have put the dynastic, loveless marriages of the past firmly behind them in favour of marrying for love. As 'commoners' join the royal family, they bring with them their own families and experiences, many of which are shared by the wider populace - upon whose continued affection and approval the future of the monarchy ultimately depends so long as they can continue to learn, adapt and evolve to create a thoroughly modern royal family.

— Non-progressive dynasties —

While most royal dynasties are preoccupied with being as modern as possible, some are retreating further behind their palace walls

While most of the world's remaining royal families are trying their best to ensure their continued existence by being as progressive, accessible and relatable as possible, a few have reacted to the new threats and pressures of the modern world by retreating further away and even deliberately returning to the protocol and traditions of the past in order to preserve and emphasise their status while keeping their people at bay. The Saudi royal family in particular is known for its conservatism, secrecy and luxurious lifestyle, all of which are at odds with the egalitarianism and relatability sought by their Western counterparts. Meanwhile, in Thailand it is still illegal and punishable with up to 15 years in prison to criticise the monarch. In Japan the royal family is facing a crisis as the result of a rule that dictates that princesses of the royal house must be disinherited if they marry commoners - which is all well and good until you end up with several princesses and no princes for them to marry. Although this closeted existence is clearly designed to protect the interests of the royal dynasty, if history has taught us anything, it is that royal families who retreat into their shells and don't make a serious effort to adapt to the world around them, move with the times and maintain relevance are in danger of becoming redundant and even extinct when they lose the goodwill of their people and their fellow monarchs.

Saudi Arabia's new Crown Prince seems just as conservative as his forebears

Official royal events tend to be very different to the stiff, unsmiling and formal occasions of the past

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Royal Dynasties

What does the future hold?

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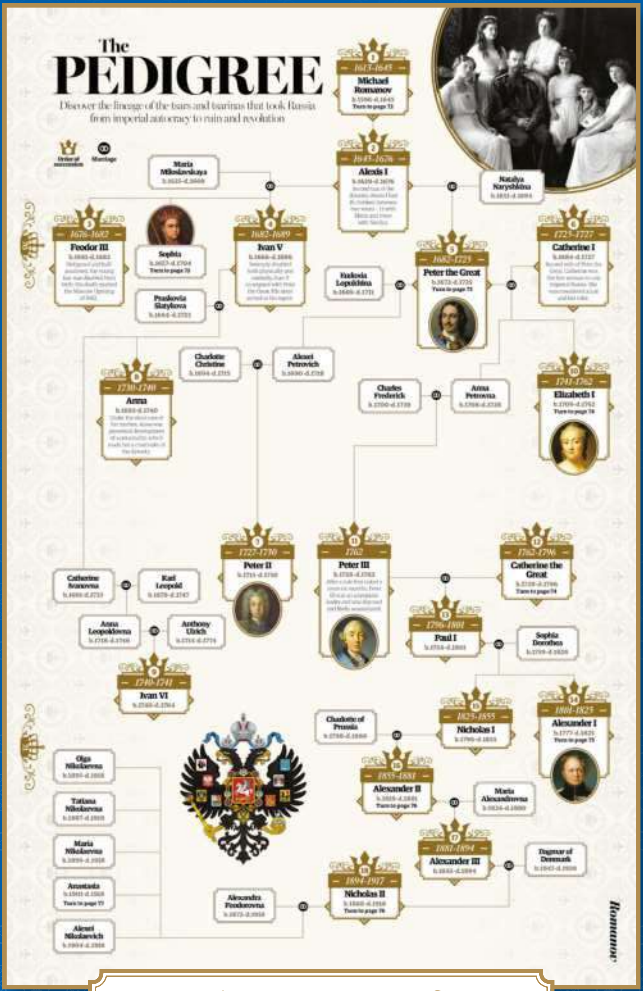
THE FUTURE OF ROYALTY

What does the future hold for the world's royal dynasties and how must they adapt to survive?



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